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AIAI AND GONGON ROLL OUT THE MAGIC!

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HE'S THE STAR OF 2006!
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OFFICIAL REVIEW!

MARIO & LUIGI

PARTNERS IN TIME
IT'S A BLAST FROM THE PAST



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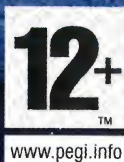
— GENESIS —



The return of an RPG legend!



NINTENDO DS



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GAME OVER, no continues



Just like Princess Peach down there, it's OK to cry.

After 162 issues and 13 happy years, the *NOM* train is pulling into its final station. This is our last ever issue.

A completely new team will be here from next month, so you'll still get your Nintendo fix. You just won't see me grinning at you from the Welcome page ever again. Or that horrible shirt.

It's with a genuinely heavy heart that I write these words – eight years on a games magazine and what a journey it's been. The team and I hope you've enjoyed reading our reviews, gawped at our E3 coverage and that our guides have helped you out of a few scrapes over the years. Dan also hopes you've liked his covers.

The entire *NOM* team are now heading to pastures new, but should you ever be online be sure to give us a *Mario Kart* challenge.

For now though, it's goodbye, good luck and keep the Nintendo faith.

Enjoy our last mag!

Tim Street

Editor am cryzor



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(and the thing they did on the last day)

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**THIS MONTH...
IT'S THE END
OF AN ERA**

➤ Get your hankies at the ready because it's the end of the line for *Nintendo Official Magazine* as you know it. Look at Mel Gibson's face on the first cover. If only he knew all those years ago that the guillotine would one day fall on the magazine of his dreams. Once he finds out, he's going to be gutted. Supposedly, that issue of *Nintendo Magazine System* is hung inside a golden frame in his living room.

Now look how everything's changed by the time we've reached the latest cover. More colours have been invented. Mario's moustache has got bigger and Mel Gibson is nowhere to be seen. It's been a rollercoaster ride everybody and we hope you've enjoyed it, even during the last days of the N64 when the coaster threatened to breakdown. Thankfully, Pikachu was on hand to provide the necessary electricity to save it. Thank you, Pikachu. Now turn to page 23 to get the full low down on what's happening to *NOM*. It's been emotional.



NINTENDO MAGAZINE

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SYSTEM OCT#1



WEAPON
ITS SUPER NES!

CLUSIVE!

R MARIO KART
REVIEW OF THIS
RACING GAME!

VED INSIDE!

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ON ROLL



DOG!
INSIDE!



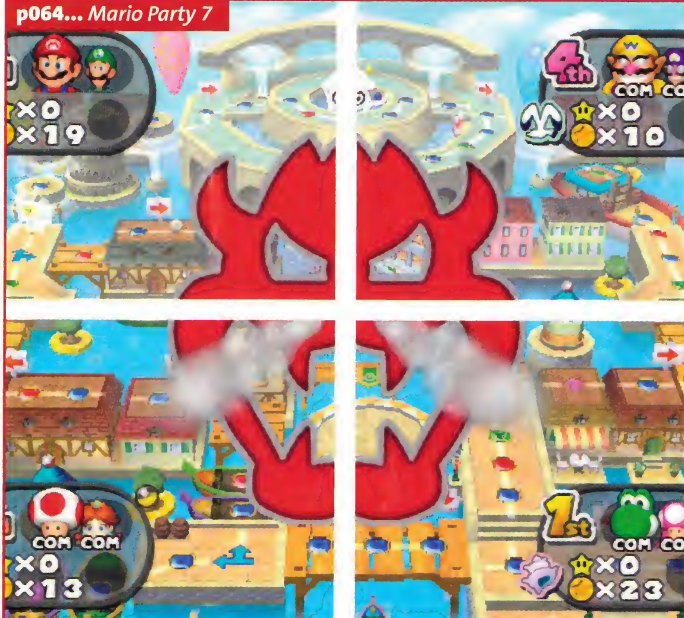
ut Legends • Animal Crossing • Final Fantasy IV
Castlevania • Mario Party 7 and much more!

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THE COVER STORY!

Mario & Luigi: Partners in Time

008



10 THINGS WE DIDN'T KNOW LAST MONTH...

1. Time travel could get any better than *Quantum Leap* (Mario & Luigi: Partners in Time, p008) 2. Mario would take on the might of Microsoft in Japan and win (World of Nintendo, p026) 3. Seal would be turfed out again (World of Nintendo, p031) 4. A little robot would steal our hearts... (*Chibi Robo*, p038) 5. ... only for peace to be shattered by the annual top 20 fist fight (Games of 2005, p055) 6. You could get two awesome games on one GBA cart (*Castlevania Double Pack*, p070) 7. The prince formerly known as rubbish would surprise us again (*Battles of Prince of Persia*, p072) 8. We'd give our lowest ever score in our last issue (*Crazy Frog Racer*, p087) 9. One of the greatest GBA games ever would finally get released (*Wario Ware Twisted*, p088) 10. You'd send so many brilliant comic strips that we'd be forced to print some more (Royal Mail, p110)



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Mario & Luigi: Partners in Time

There are four new time lords in town and not a single one wears a silly scarf

GAME INFO

Out: 10 FEBRUARY
Players: 1
Price: £29.99
Publisher: NINTENDO



> Throughout history there have been many famous brothers. Look in a history book and you'll find accounts of brothers who pushed the limits of science, social attitudes and many other important things. Famous brothers we can think of include the Wright brothers, the Wachowski brothers (mainly for messing up *The Matrix Reloaded* and *Revolutions*), the Marx brothers and, of course, probably the most famous brothers ever... the Chuckle brothers. God bless them and their moustaches.

But there are two equally moustachioed brothers who have beaten all others. They've saved kingdoms, won karting championships, become tennis stars, danced their way to justice, hit the golfing greens and even been into space. Well, to be accurate, one's been into space, so don't send in any letters. It must be pretty obvious which brothers we're talking about by now. It is of course... the Chuckle brothers. No wait, it's the Mario brothers. Obviously.

Now they've turned their attentions to something else. There's one thing that has so far escaped their ambitions to do absolutely everything. It's time to time travel. The brothers are going back to where it all started. Before Mario jumped on his first Goomba. Before the brothers were turned into paper. Before Luigi proved what a great ghostbuster he is. But even in this past time the Mushroom Kingdom is already running into a whole heap of trouble. **III**







It's time for Mario to put his RPG hat on again... ha ha, see what we did there with the time reference? We're probably going to try and fit as many time jokes in as we can during the space of this review. Of course, there's always a chance that halfway through we'll get fed up of it. So don't be surprised if towards the end of this ten-page mega review we've dropped the jokes, the sentence structure becomes sloppy and we just repeat the phrase: "Partners in Time is oh so very good." Look, we're just giving you a heads up before you CLOCK something suspicious going on. Ha! This is going to be great. (Are you sure? – Ed)

Time is clearly the order of the day in Mario and Luigi's latest adventure, which sees them travelling to both old and new version of the most famous kingdom in gaming history. But things actually start off in space with a view of a peculiar

looking purple mushroom-shaped planet. We've never heard of such a planet and rang space expert and Gamesmaster Patrick Moore



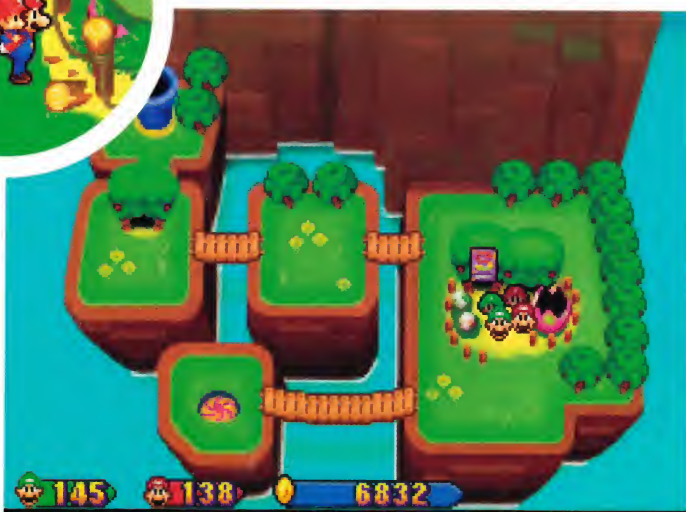
■ Toadsworth, before the days of false teeth and colostomy bags

to find out more. He didn't know anything about the planet, but he did tell us where the warp pipes where in *Super Mario Bros.* which was nice. Thanks Gamesmaster, thanks.

Anyway, just like *War of the Worlds* but without the irritating little girl or Tom Cruise, the planet's inhabitants decided to invade... the Mushroom Kingdom. Strangely, they don't adopt the principal of burying huge mechanical machines underground millions of years before launching an attack, then forgetting their pack lunch



■ Looks like the Mario boys have been living near Sellafield too long



"The Mario brothers are going back to where it all started"

and getting all ill. Instead they just use good old-fashioned UFOs and there are hundreds of them. These invaders are called Shroobs and they're a nasty bunch of mushrooms.

But the Mushroom Kingdom they choose to invade is a past one complete with younger versions of all your favourite Nintendo characters, like Mario, Luigi, Bowser, Peach and, to a lesser extent, Toadsworth. Obviously, Mario hasn't got the magic moustache to save everyone yet, so it looks like the Mushroom Kingdom could be in real trouble. However, flash forward a few years to the current kingdom and Gadd's just invented a time machine. Now... can you see where this is going? Of course, the current Mario brothers end up travelling to the past kingdom, where they meet past

versions of themselves who help to try and save the current Princess Peach who travelled back into the past, while also saving the old Mushroom Kingdom. Confused? We were.

Clearly though, the guys at developer Alpha Dream have never seen *Back to the Future*. There's none of that time paradox business by the brothers meeting past versions of themselves. Doc Brown's hair would be even wilder with that thought. Actually, as you progress through the game it does make a few humorous nods to the whole paradox business. Gadd has some serious issues with the older and younger brothers teaming up with each other. Yabbo yabbo. Gadd's references show Alpha Dream wanted to make this adventure as funny as possible, just like the last one. *Superstar*



■ Even Yoshi, the dino who eats ANYTHING, gets scared sometimes

Fighting Saucers

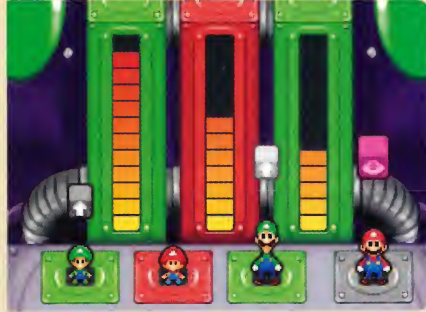
The Space Cadets should have done this

Because the story in *Partners in Time* is all about aliens, there was always bound to be a section where you got to go and play inside a UFO. But even we weren't expecting a bit where you had to drive the UFO and battle against other flying saucers! That's great.

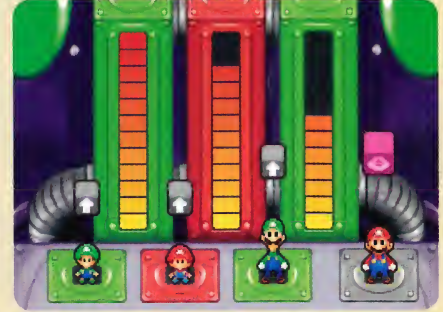
You only get to navigate the UFO twice in the whole game but it makes for an interesting break from the rest of the game. It reminds us slightly of the tank battles in *Slime Mori Mori Dragon Quest 2* (see *Big in Japan*).



Mario lobbs his younger self into the air to begin the battle.



The babies and Luigi are in charge of moving the ship up.



Because Mario is the oldest he gets to shoot the gun. POW!



Saga was probably one of the funniest GBA games we've ever played. The dialogue was spot-on and we actually laughed out loud on several occasions. So we were really looking forward to playing *Partners in Time* and expected it to be one of the funniest DS games yet. Luckily, that's absolutely true and the sequel provides some genuinely humorous situations.

The comedy comes from all different angles. If you don't laugh at least once, you must be being tortured while

playing and if you snigger your torturers will saw off your arms. There really is something for everyone here. One of the best bits is when you meet a pair of Hammer Bros. who speak in forum slang. It's great to see Nintendo characters saying: "We roxor you. Then you am cry." There's also another part when we think a magic gate hints Luigi may be gay – which we haven't got a problem with, obviously. The gate mentions that Luigi is somewhat "dubious". Now, this could mean

the fact that he's a coward or it could mean something else. Then again we could have just been reading too much into it.

The humour comes through a lot as you work your way through the story collecting the pieces of the Cobalt Star, which is the only thing that can destroy the wicked Shroobs. It's a bit like the all-powerful Thousand Year Door. The pieces of the Cobalt Star have been scattered through the old Mushroom Kingdom. So it's up

to Mario, Luigi and the babies to travel to different areas collecting the parts.

When we heard about the prospect of the brothers travelling backwards and forwards in time we were very excited. This wasn't just because we enjoy time travel, although debating the feasibility of *Back to the Future* is one of our favourite past times.

Why doesn't Marty just assume he's going to get back to the future and say he'll put some spare fuel in the back before)))

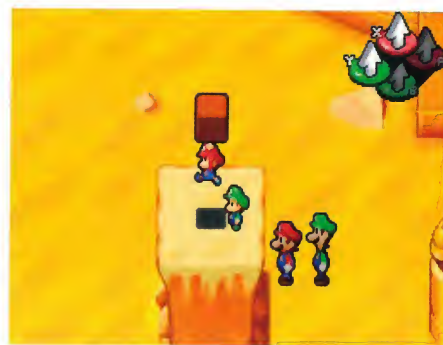
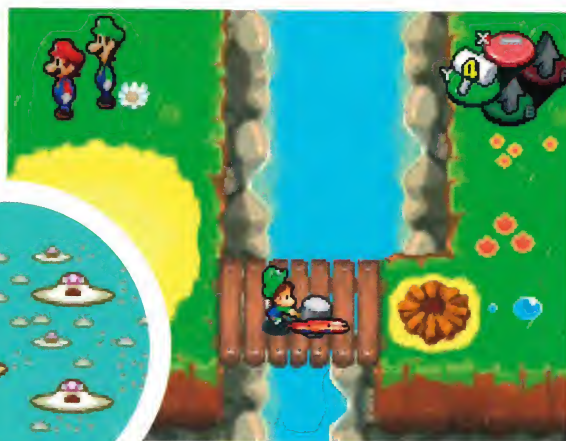
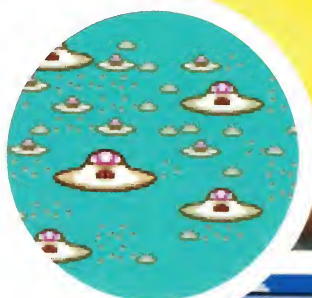


"We expected it to be one of the funniest DS games yet"

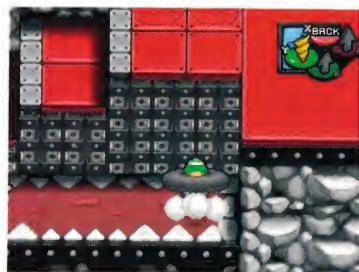


he accidentally travels to the past? Anyway... we hoped the time travel aspect would provide some smart puzzles in which changes in the past versions of levels affected the future levels. Unfortunately, although you do travel to older examples of Yoshi's Island and Bowser's Castle, you never travel to the future ones. This is a real shame and we reckon Alpha Dream missed out on a real opportunity there. It could have been rather like *A Link to the Past* but with Mario and Luigi.

That's not to say there aren't any puzzles in the game, because there are loads of them and some are really great. In *Superstar Saga* the main gimmick was that you controlled both of the characters by using **A** and **B** to make them attack, jump or speak to characters. Now you've got four characters under your control and although you still use the traditional controls for Mario and Luigi; you have to use the **X** and **Y**.



■ Oxo cubes can be fatal if thrown correctly



■ Kids: don't put tyres over your head. They could get stuck



■ Bros. Powers have been scrapped, but there are plenty of items to use when you're battling

Developers in time

What did Alpha Dream do before Mario and Luigi?

■ After literally days (well, ten minutes on the internet) of extensive research we could only find one more game Alpha Dream had developed. It's called *Tomato*

Adventure and it was released on GBA in 2002. Actually it's extremely similar in style to *Mario and Luigi*. You can see the foundations for *Superstar Saga* in *Tomato*

Adventure. It features awesome sprites, a silly story with equally ridiculous enemies and a battle system that isn't like your typical RPG.



These are the enemies. They're evil tomatoes, we think. Tomatoes, mushrooms... it's basically all the same.



This is the lead character. He may not have a moustache or a hat but that doesn't matter. He's still nifty.



The villages are very bright and colourful, just like many of the locations you visit in *Mario and Luigi*.



Look the fights are slightly similar. He uses a yo-yo to attack enemies and you have to time your hits.



■ Bet you can't find this sort of flooring down at Allied Carpets



■ Birds on flying carpets? What's wrong with their wings for God's sake?



■ "This is what we do with stars of crap games like *Crazy Frog Racer*"



buttons for baby Mario and Luigi. Normally, the babies are carried on Mario and Luigi's backs but often they're required to solve puzzles on their own, which is where the fun begins.



■ "See kids, told you Santa's real!"

The little brothers can explore small areas their older and fatter versions can't possibly fit into. Normally these tiny tunnels will hold the solutions to obstacles blocking your way. For example, you may come to a pit full of spikes no one can cross, but nearby is a tantalising hole. Send the babies inside and you'll find the controls for a lift that spans the pit. At this point the action splits over the two DS screens. So you can see how the actions of the babies effect their older selves. It's a fantastic idea and we really can't imagine it working so well on any other games console.

Each time you come to these dual screen puzzles you'll be beaming with excitement. Plus there are actually a lot of different ones available. To start off with you'll typically be lobbing the babies into a tree stump while they can explore. But as you continue you'll

"There are some really great puzzles in *Partners in Time*"

have areas in which all the brothers have to hit a series of different switches, open doors for old Mario and Luigi to pass through and other fun things. Luckily, although the brothers may often be separated they're never far apart. Dotted throughout levels are special pipe blocks that reunite the brothers wherever they are. This means you never have to worry about getting lost and it never gets confusing.

Often key to the puzzles you

will encounter are the different powers the brothers have.

In *Superstar Saga* the special abilities of Mario and Luigi were a great part of the game but they also had their problems. At first, just coping with the different jump abilities was fine. But as you got more abilities, which relied on the brothers being in a particular formation, it soon got quite confusing and frustrating. Luckily this problem is avoided in the sequel and although





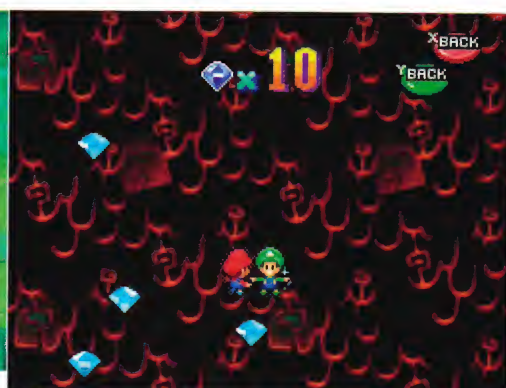
the number of special moves available is fairly decent, the confusing element is non-existent. This is mainly because the moves are spread between the four brothers and don't rely on you being in a particular formation.

But what are the moves? Actually, by this point you've probably noticed the time references have decreased quite severely from that first paragraph. Yeah, we're not even halfway through yet and already we've knocked that idea on the head. But don't worry there's still time and they might make a return just to tick you off. So, what are the moves? Well Mario and Luigi still have the spin jump from the original, but that's about it from *Superstar Saga*.

The babies have taken the hammer from the hilarious forum-speak Hammer Bros. and



Just for fun, we've used this picture twice. Can you spot it?



baby Mario even has old Mario's ability to drink vast quantities of water. Baby Luigi is now the one who can bury himself underground. Plus the high jump from the original has gone too. Instead, the babies are thrown up into the air in sections where the brothers need to reach high places; these are also normally sections where the babies have to go off exploring. Using these powers is fairly simple as well and you just use **R** to select the one you want to use.

But the best powers are certainly those where the four siblings interact with



Tim's wallet looks just like this when he opens it. Which is rare



Shaking a can of lager before opening it will always be funny



"That's another fine mess you've got me into"

each other. Later in the game Mario and Luigi learn to roll themselves into a ball. This is a particularly brilliant move and we can imagine their spines and bones snapping as they form themselves into a makeshift Morph Ball. But at first you only ever use it once to get up a steep slope. However, after a while,

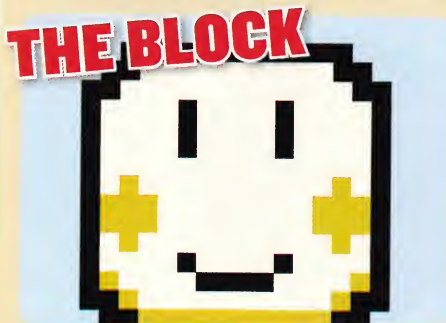
you learn a new move in which the older brothers roll into the ball, then squash the babies flat by rolling over them. Once flat the babies can crawl into smaller spaces and even float. It's a great way to get them all to react together. Although it can be problematic taking control of the babies once they've been

Cancelled cameos

The characters that didn't make it into *Partners in Time*

One of the many joys of playing a *Mario and Luigi* game is the cameos from some of your favourite Mario Bros. characters. Alpha Dream have tried to cram in as many as possible but obviously some characters didn't quite cut it at audition. Shy Guy, for

example, turned up drunk then started to try to take his robe off. It was disgusting, Princess Peach threw up. So, here are the other characters that we half expected to find lurking somewhere in the game, but didn't quite make it through.



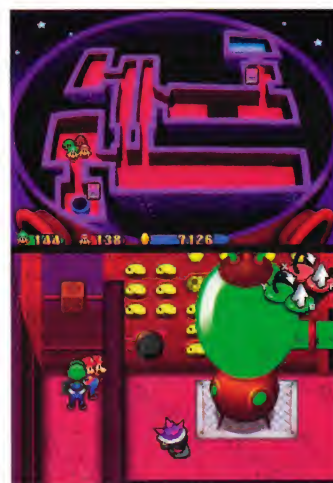
THE BLOCK
He came in and started sobbing about the glory days of *Yoshi's Island*. There's something dodgy between him and Luigi though, so he was turned down.



TINGLE
Not a real Mario character but that didn't stop him barging into the auditions and demanding a part. He shouted about being RADA trained and a "professional".



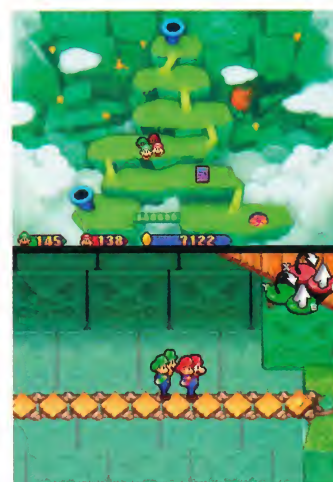
BARLOW
Riding high after thinking she was considered for *Mario Smash Football*. The producers of *Coronation Street* stopped the cameo, though. Her day will come soon.



■ "And this is the room where we liquidise frogs, just for fun"



■ The on-going search for cloud nine continues



■ "Bloody hell, you're always on my back about it, aren't you?"

squished, which is a shame.

But that's really our only criticism with the special abilities, which work brilliantly compared to *Superstar Saga*. Even better is the way in which you learn the moves. Most are taught by the past and present versions of Toadsworth. The toadstool reincarnation of C3PO is always trying to keep baby Peach happy and that normally means getting in lots of scrapes. They roll into a ball by accident, spin themselves until they are dizzy and generally get themselves in a real mess. When it comes to actually teaching Mario and Luigi how to perform these moves, the top screen

shows a little comic of how to do them. We love the artwork of Mario and Luigi, so any chance to see it close up in comic books is a great plus point for us, and should be for you too.

So you've got the special moves, but what about moves in battles? In the original, Mario and Luigi could use Bros. Powers during fights. These powers saw you quickly pressing either **A** or **B** to control a particular brother as he either jumped on or hit an enemy. The Bros. Powers were fantastic because they smashed the normally stale RPG formula of choosing a move then watching it performed with a big hammer. So what

"The best powers are where the four interact with each other"

about the sequel? How do the Bros. Powers perform here? Well they don't because they've been completely **SCRAPPED**.

Now before you start penning an angry letter to Nintendo, just calm down. Take a second to breathe deeply and think happy thoughts. Come on, think nice things with us... a badger in a hammock, a budgie eating a sausage, Girls Aloud. That's better isn't it? The Bros. Powers have gone, but they've been replaced with a number of different and wonderful aspects. For starters, thanks to the fact you've now got two pairs of brothers, you can use both Marios in one attack. Old Mario

will jump on top of the enemy but just as he's about to hit, you need to quickly tap **X** to throw baby Mario at them. Time it right and you can then press **A** to follow up that attack with a powerful jump from Mario. A similar system is used when

the babies use their hammers in battles.

"BUT WHAT ABOUT THE SPECIAL MOVES? TELL ME YOU IDIOTS!" Yes, we hear your cries and we're about to tell you all about them.

Bloody hell, just give us a moment will you? Well, although there are no Bros. Powers there are plenty of items to use. From a nifty shop within the castle walls you **!!!**



■ Luigi caught the full force of the Shell's chicken tikka massala



■ Blue star hide and seek was just too easy for the brothers



can buy Koopa Shells, Pocket Chomps and other items that should probably be classed as weapons of mass destruction. The items are absolute genius. A typical example is the Koopa Shell that must be kicked at the enemy. First, as Mario, you kick it towards the enemy with **A**, once it hits the Shell rebounds back towards Luigi. Next you need to kick it back with **B** and the process continues.

With each successful kick it gets faster and faster. But if you really want to cause damage, and you've got the babies with you in battle, you have to press the baby's button as he hits the enemy, as well as making sure you kick it properly. It's madness, believe us.

Many of the items use the brothers in this way and you should start memorising the face of your DS right now. You're going to need to know exactly where each button is. It will be vital when you're using items like the Mix Flower, which you have to charge up by randomly pressing the corresponding



I'm a little teapot finals get underway



Don't fall on the cacti – you might feel a bit of a prick

brother's button. A good knowledge of your DS is key to getting a great hit with this item. All the items are a great test of your reactions and ability to hammer buttons like a fleshy pneumatic drill. To be honest we'd much rather have the items than the Bros. Powers.

If we've got one criticism with the items, it's that they make the battles really easy. Once you become good at using a particular item, like the Mix Flower, battles become a breeze. We didn't lose a single battle during the time we played *Partners in Time* and even the boss battles didn't pose much of a problem thanks to the items. But, in their defence you do need to be good at using the items to really see any real advantage in the fights.

We're also a bit sad none of the items use the touch screen. It would have been nice if at least one required you to stroke



Come on guys, it's no time to hang around now is it?

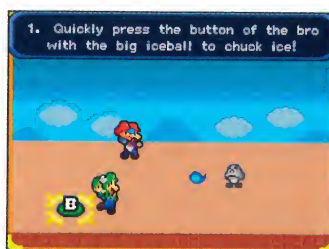
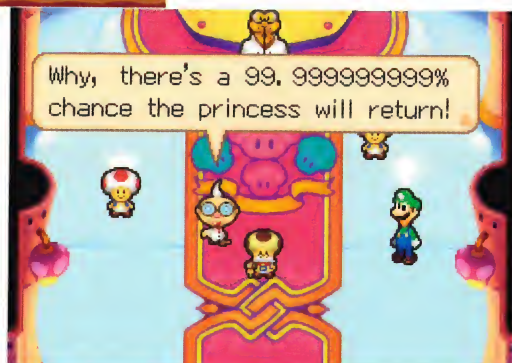
the screen or even blow into the mic or something. In fact, you only use the touch screen once during the entire game. But does that really matter when the dual screens are used to such great effect in the rest of the story? No, probably not.

Another niggle we had with the game is that apart from the main adventure there's really very little else to see or do. It's a very linear story with no side quests to divert your attention. Even the bean collecting element

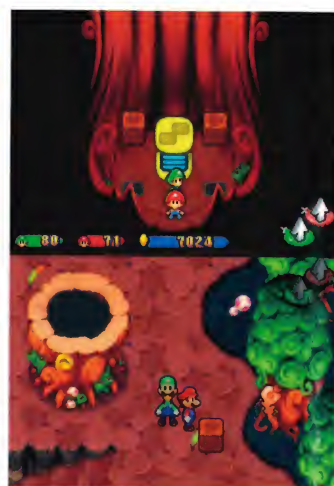
from *Superstar Saga* has been streamlined. Now there's only one type of bean to collect, which earns you rare

badges. It's just a real shame Alpha Dream didn't take a leaf out of *Zelda's* book and offer a little bit extra for those willing to explore. Although the adventure does last a good 15 hours, some side quests would have added some much needed replay value and longevity.

The only real kind of side quest is trying to get all the



Hmm, but which button to press? It's not that obvious, is it?



Backgrounds look much nicer than the ones in *Superstar Saga*

Right sprite

2D is such a beautiful thing, you know

Oh Mario, you're so lovely in your 2D glory. We wish we were turned into sprites like this. It would be great.



Half the reason we love Mario and Luigi so much is because of the awesome sprites. Alpha Dream created their own style of Mario that's somewhere in between *Super Mario World* and *Paper Mario*. We wished every Nintendo game featured graphics like this. In fact, we wish every Nintendo game featured sprites like this. Imagine a *Zelda* game with Mario and Luigi style characters. That would be cool. It would be properly "book".

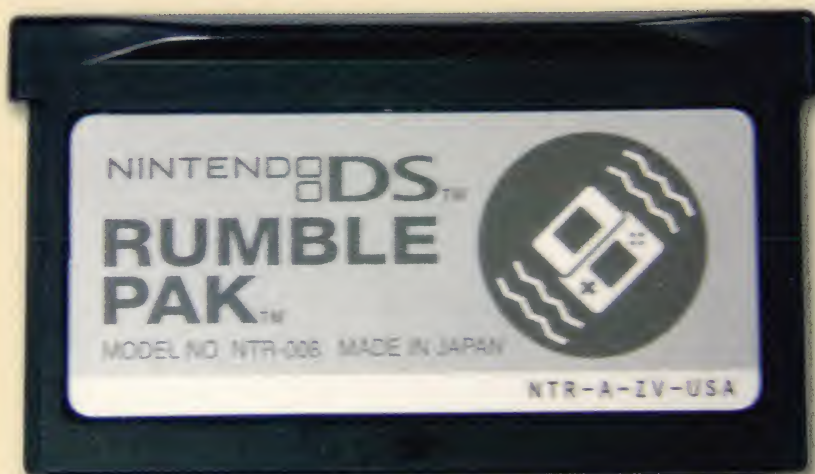


Ugh! What a horrible mistake. It looks like Yoshi's eaten too much fruit and thrown up on page 16

Rum-balls

The Rumble Pak should be given the rumble sack

■ *Partners in Time* uses the Rumble Pak that came bundled with *Metroid Prime Pinball* in the States. For those not in the know, the Pak is a GBA cart that plugs into the GBA slot on the DS and rumbles. To be honest, it doesn't really add much to the game. During battles the Pak will jolt each time you make a decent hit or get hit yourself. But it just feels like someone poking your DS. It's slightly irritating and we reckon the DS is just too big to have a decent rumble.



"It's fun, funny and frantic, plus any other positive word beginning with F"

different clothing and badges the brothers can wear. Once again, just like *Superstar Saga*, the siblings can acquire special accessories that increase their stats. The stats are typical RPG fare, with stuff like attack, defence and so on. But even to get all the best badges and clothing we really didn't have to trek out of our way very much. As you progress through the levels you'll often just find the superior items as part of the normal adventure.

But the few problems that *Partners in Time* has are completely overshadowed by the rest of

the adventure. It's fun, funny and frantic, plus any other positive word you can think of that begins with F. The introduction of baby versions of Mario and Luigi add something new to the *Superstar Saga* mix and the battle items are a lot better than the Bros. Powers. This is the kind of thing Mario should be doing, not playing baseball or football. Give him a great adventure and he really shines. Now we just can't wait to play the new *Super Mario Bros.* on DS. If it's got the same high production values as this game, it'll be an absolute belter. Start counting down NOW. That was kind of our last time reference by the way. You see we did almost keep it up until the end. Best clock off...



■ (Right) Ginger and with glasses? Not got a lot going for you now have you?



Nintendo®

OFFICIAL MAG SAYS...



GRAPHICS

9

Not hugely different from *Superstar Saga* but that doesn't really matter. The backgrounds are quite a bit nicer, though.



SOUND

9

Classic Mario tunes remixed, we love the underground music from *Super Mario Bros.* Sadly, the battle music is always the same.



INNOVATION

8

Dual screens are used perfectly to create some challenging puzzles. We would have liked some touch screen input, though.



VALUE

8

The main adventure lasts 15-20 hours, but there's little to do once you've finished it. Side quests would have been nice.

MARIOS AND WARIOS



A BRAND NEW MARIO ADVENTURE, WHICH IS ALWAYS WELCOME.



THE INTRODUCTION OF THE BABIES IS A FANTASTIC AND INNOVATIVE IDEA.



A VERY HUMOROUS AND WELL WRITTEN STORYLINE WHICH MADE US LAUGH.



THE BATTLE ITEMS ARE A GREAT TEST OF YOUR REACTIONS.



THE ADVENTURE IS EXTREMELY LINEAR AND NOT THAT HARD.



THE TOUCH SCREEN IS ONLY USED ONCE AND CRAPLY.

THE VERDICT

Rob It had a lot to live up to but Mario and Luigi have done it again. This is hilarious, great fun and ranks among the best on DS. If there was more to the main adventure, it would have been THE best.

Nintendo®
OFFICIAL MAGAZINE
JUDGEMENT

90%



World of Nintendo

INSIDE World of Nintendo

DEVELOPING THE LOVE

The world and his dog think Revolution's ace

18

FISHING FOR SPIES

Unsurprisingly, Sam Fisher's back spying again

20

DRY YOUR EYES TIM

A look back on the beautiful history of *NOM*

23

TAKING NAMES

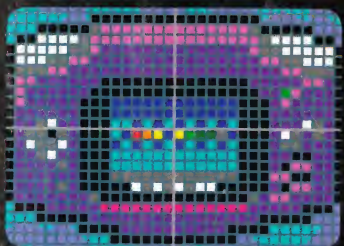
Reggie's conquering the world at *Mario Kart*

24

'AVE IT AVATARS

More lovely sprites for you to copy and boast about

25



KART CONQUERS 360

Xbox 360 struggles against *MK DS* in Japan

26

TOWER POWER

Sega announces new sim game for GBA. Hooray

29



WANTED: JOB FOR SEAL

What's the angry blubber ball going to do now?

31



■ Good looks and great to play with. Revolution sounds like our ideal girl

BIG NAMES BACK REVOLUTION

The world of gaming is loving Nintendo's next-gen. That's official.



Developers from some of the world's biggest games companies have gone on record to declare their love for Revolution, and give us an insight into some potential ideas for next-generation games.

With just months to go until Revolution's worldwide launch, bosses and developers from the likes of Activision, Sega and Ubisoft have revealed their thoughts on what they'd like to see on Nintendo's next home console in *Nintendo Power*, the US equivalent of *Nintendo Official Magazine*.

The remote control-style controller for Revolution has certainly opened the eyes of some of the biggest names in the games industry, offering as it does a completely new way of playing games. With its motion-detecting sensors and nunchaku add-on that throws in the added control of a 3D Stick and two trigger buttons, you can be

sure many new styles of game are in the offing.

From innovations with existing titles or revolutionary ideas specifically for the new system the developers are obviously excited about the potential that's just around the corner. Judging by what they had to say we could potentially expect to see twists on RPG controls and brand new titles like a fireman sim. Imagine putting out fires on screen with the new controller? *Burning Rangers* on Revolution? That would be too cool. Sorry, hot.

Obviously we have no idea if *BR* will be heading to Revolution, but at least teams around the world are already dreaming up new game concepts for Nintendo. There's still no word on an actual launch date yet for Revolution, but you can expect it to hit stores some time between the end of March and the end of December. Expect more Revolution news over the coming months.

The Revolutionaries

We couldn't reach Lenin, but some others are loving Revolution

'We ♥ Revolution' shouted the games development world in unison as *NOM* was going to press.

We knew you would want to hear what the biggest names in the business had to say about the new home console, so we've hand-picked the best of the bunch to get you salivating...



"Envisioning Link's spin attack, Mario's triple jump and Samus' gunplay on Revolution is an intriguing exercise. How will Spider-Man's Revolution webs be cast, Tony Hawk's deck be flipped and *Call of Duty* grenades be thrown?"

Steve Pearce, VP of Technology, Activision

"We can propose new types of interactions that are easy and fun, as they rely on a simple gesture. We can translate into video game interactions all the tools you can manipulate with your hand: the sculptor's tool, the doctor's scalpel, the fireman's hose... imagine you are a doctor curing patients or an architect who builds his own house!"

Nicolas Eypert, Creative Director, Ubisoft

"RPGs will be greatly enhanced due to new control styles. Pointing will make moving in large environments very simple, and twist and position-sensing will allow for dual weapon wielding or gesture-based spell-casting."

Bill Petro, Senior VP of Product Development, Sega of America

"Any genre that's suffered from traditional controller limitations stands to initially benefit the most, particularly ones with too many complex button combinations. Mouse-orientated PC genres could become more console-friendly with the Revolution controller."

Jack Sorensen, Executive VP, Worldwide Studios, THQ



"I can certainly see lots of opportunities for classic-style games like platformers that new and old gamers will enjoy. Any game that has the flow of motion in three dimensions will benefit Revolution. Flying games will be wild and more fun than ever."

Bill Gardner, President/CEO, Eidos

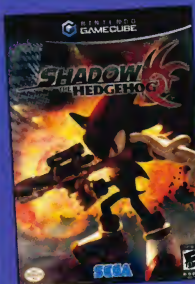


TOO MUCH INFO



TALES FROM THE DS

Two new *Tales Of* games are heading to Nintendo consoles over the coming months. *Tales Of Phantasia* for GBA and *Tales Of The Tempest* for Nintendo DS, both from Namco, are currently in development and will see you control Cress Albane or Caius Qualls in giant RPGs. Mutsumi Inomata is working on character designs, just as he did on previous episodes of the game series.



TOP OF THE TREE

Just as *NOM* was going to print, news of the Christmas number one games arrived hot off the presses. Top of the full price GameCube chart was *Shadow The Hedgehog*, *Mario Kart* led the way on DS and *Pokémon*

Emerald was still riding high in the GBA charts. Some how *Crazy Frog Racer* snuck into the GBA top 20. Sad, really.

N-ICE IDEA

The game of animation film sequel *Ice Age 2: The Meltdown* has been snapped up by Vivendi and will be due for release when the flick arrives in the spring. The game, which will feature on all Nintendo consoles, sees you taking control of Scrat the sabre-toothed squirrel in your bid to help Manny the mammoth, Sid the sloth and Diego the sabre-toothed tiger escape the valley that's being flooded by melting glaciers.



CHOMP CHAMPIONS

Congratulations and well done to our four Chain Chomp Challenge winners. It was a close run thing after going down to the final month of contests but the names with the most certificates were A. Brightman, G. Colly, M. Roche and D. Brown. The prizes should be winging their way to you now guys! Many thanks to everyone who entered.

Spying Fisher

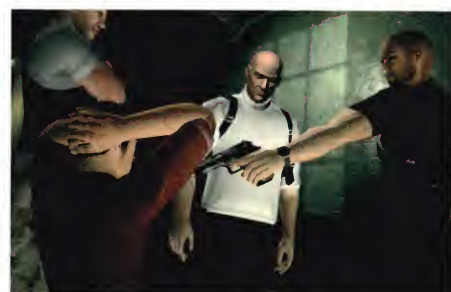
Grab your night vision, the wannabe Jack Bauer's back



Oh come on, you knew it was coming. Ubisoft has announced a **FOURTH** *Splinter Cell* game will be released on GameCube this year and we've got some fancy new screenshots. Admittedly they're probably from the Xbox version, but they'll help you get a decent idea of what it's all about.

The game's going to be called *Splinter Cell Double Agent* and sees Sam Fisher going undercover to infiltrate an American terrorist organisation. A bit like *Shadow the Hedgehog*, you'll have to decide whether to be bad or good and your decisions will affect certain outcomes in the game. Wow, we can't believe we've just compared a gritty spy thriller to the ridiculous *Shadow the Hedgehog*. That connection takes a real leap of faith, but we reckon we pulled it off.

Your actions will even dictate what gadgets you'll have at your disposal during missions. For example, if you accidentally garrotte someone with a decent gun, you might not get the weapon in the next level. We're kind of thinking out loud with that statement but you'll probably see similar situations in the finished game when it's released later this year.



We Can't Wait For...

DRILL DOZER

The game formerly known as *Screw Breaker*, at least in Japan, is released in America next month. We think it's absolutely brilliant and the fact it's been confirmed that it'll also have an in-built Rumble Pak just fills up with happy happy joy joy juice.

The game sees you using a giant drill to make your way through platforming-style levels. As you progress you can upgrade the drill to give you different abilities and special moves. It's by Game Freak, the developer who make *Pokémon*, so it should be a quality title.



GBA

What do you get in the
UK's best-selling football
magazine that you don't get
anywhere else?



THE BEST INTERVIEWS!



THE BEST POSTERS!



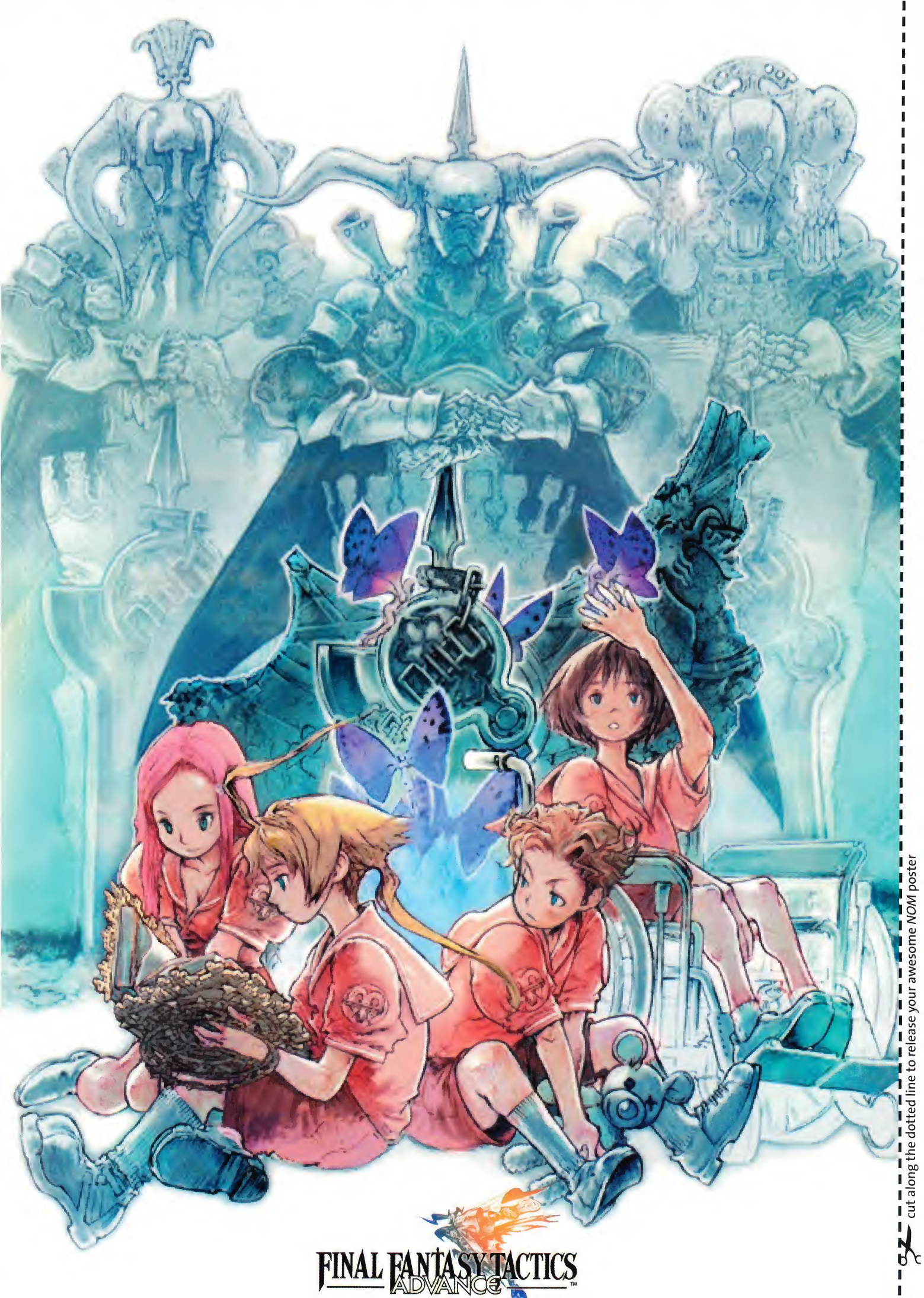
THE BEST STARS!



THE BEST VALUE!

MATCH! IT'S SIMPLY THE BEST!

on sale
every
Tuesday!



FINAL FANTASY TACTICS
ADVANCE

cut along the dotted line to release your awesome NOM poster

Say farewell to **NOM**

Keep this issue away from harm. It'll be worth a lot on eBay one day.



Goodbye, au revoir, ciao, auf wiedersehen, itte kimasu – whatever language you speak 'goodbye' still means exactly the same thing.

Nintendo Official Magazine is closing its doors for the final time this month after 162 issues and 13 years of being published by Emap Active. That doesn't mean there won't be a Nintendo magazine for you to buy as the all-new Official Nintendo Magazine will launch in February with a whole new team at the helm.

Since starting in October 1992 NOM has had many different guises, launching as *Nintendo Magazine System* to ape the name of the Nintendo Entertainment System, the company's first home console. It then changed to *Nintendo Magazine* before finally settling on *Nintendo Official Magazine* a year after the launch of the N64.

Over the years NOM has been first with all the biggest Nintendo stories from the first details of the N64, GameCube, DS and Revolution to first ever previews of *Ocarina of Time*, *GoldenEye* and *Perfect Dark*. We were also the first magazine in the UK to report on *Pokémon* before playing 60,000 Pokemaniacs on three nationwide tours.

THE HIGHLIGHTS

162 issues, but which are the cream of the crop?

Tim's been on NOM for over eight years so what better person to choose the best issues from the 162-strong line-up. He trawled

through every single issue for approximately 32 seconds before deciding the best three, which he reckons are as follows...



■ The very first *Nintendo Magazine System* featured *Lethal Weapon 3* on the cover and had first reviews of two all-time classics in the form of *Super Mario Kart* and *A Link To The Past*. It also came with a free Time Boy.



■ *Ocarina of Time* and *Pokémon* debuted in this issue with our report from the Nintendo Space World show in Japan. It came with a free *GoldenEye* guide with a tips line that people still rang two years after it closed!



■ Revolution and Game Boy Micro were shown at E3 last year and we had the scoop on Nintendo's plans to download 20 years of classics to your home console. We also had an all-new preview of *Twilight Princess*.

We Can't Wait For...

TRAUMA CENTRE: UNDER THE KNIFE

Being a doctor's great. You get to prescribe yourself loads of crazy medicine and you're always guaranteed a place in a restaurant, just in case anyone gets a bone stuck down their throat. Surprisingly, *Trauma Centre* doesn't feature a restaurant mini-game but it does have some of the best touch screen input on DS. You have to precisely use the stylus to pick bits of glass out of bodies and perform intricate surgery on breasts. That's a lie.

OPERATION SCORE

1110

MISS LIMIT



TIME LIMIT

04:34:00

Either way, I won't blame you.

...This is your decision...



High five the Wi-Fi



Almost every week sees Nintendo releasing another press release about just how incredibly successful its Wi-Fi service is. "Ten million cats play *Mario Kart* online." "Paris Hilton in home video shows her playing *Animal Crossing: Wild World* for six days straight." You get the idea.

But we don't care because we're already impressed by Nintendo's Wi-Fi service, even if the quitters in *Mario Kart* still insist on irritating us. So we were pleased to hear the service is gaining popularity by the second, which means plenty more people for us to beat on *Mario Kart*.

On 22 November there were nearly 52,000 unique users logged onto the service but, thanks to the European and Japanese launches of *Mario Kart*, the number of users almost quadrupled to a massive 200,000.

In other Wi-Fi news, December saw Reggie "taking names and kicking ass" Fils-Aime, Nintendo's Executive Vice President, Sales and Marketing, take on the whole of America in a massive *Mario Kart* challenge. He travelled down to his local McDonald's in Washington and took on all-comers in a furious challenge. We're not sure if he won, but we KNOW he had our Against Quitters avatar and Snaked like a madman.

Yet more tales of wonderful online success



■ "I'll take you all on, c'mon, I can have you no problems. Who's up for it, you bunch of pussies..."

Konno on karting

Nintendo legend states the almost inevitable

■ "Here's one I made earlier"



With the success of *Mario Kart DS*, Nintendo was bound to take its fancy new online game and run with it. Or rather drive with it. Anyway, it was bound to make sure the series didn't die. So it came as no real surprise to hear that Nintendo could already be working on a Revolution follow up.

In a recent interview with *Nintendo Power*, king developer Hideki Konno the man behind *Mario Kart DS*, spoke about how the series is developing. He said: "We're doing a lot of experiments right now with the Revolution controller and obviously the direct pointing device and its ability to track movement and distance."

"You know, that's huge, because that's a brand new thing that we've never seen before in any controller. Trying to envisage all the different things we could do with that motion sensor is a little mind-boggling," he continued.

But now comes the exciting part. He then went on to say: "As you know, *Mario Kart* has appeared on all of Nintendo's platforms so far, and I think it's done its job on the DS. So the next logical step, of course, is the Revolution. Really what we hope to do is continue to bring new and creative things to the franchise that appeal not only to our established user base, but also bring new people into the game."

So it sounds like you could be using the awesome controller like a steering wheel some time this year. Wait until after E3 in May to hear more news about this exciting prospect.

Ava' gander at these

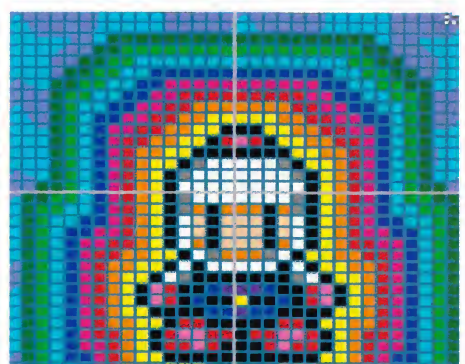
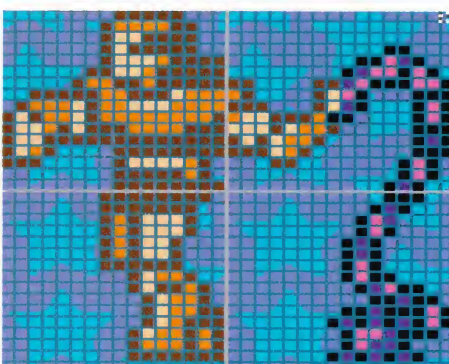
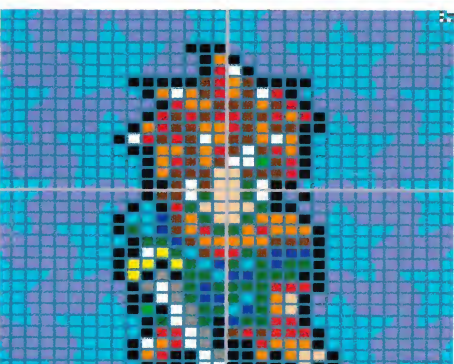
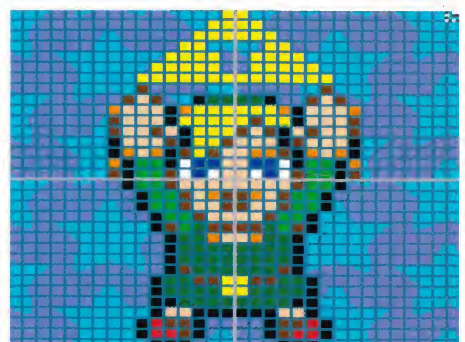
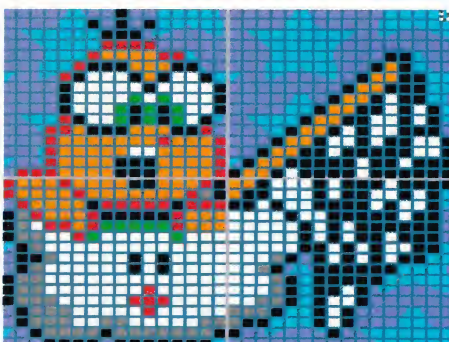
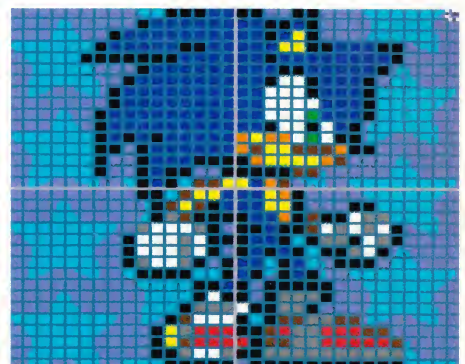
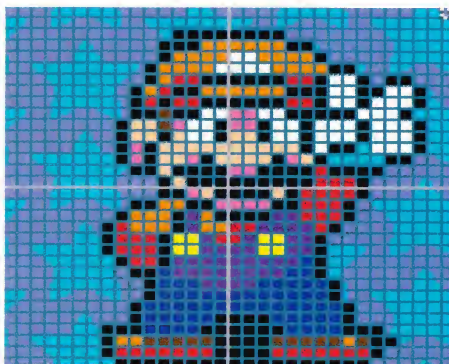
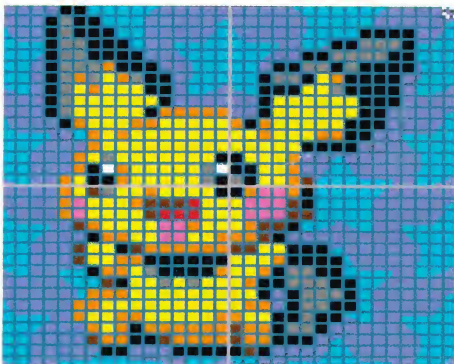
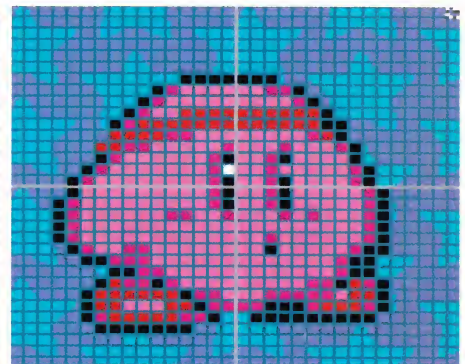
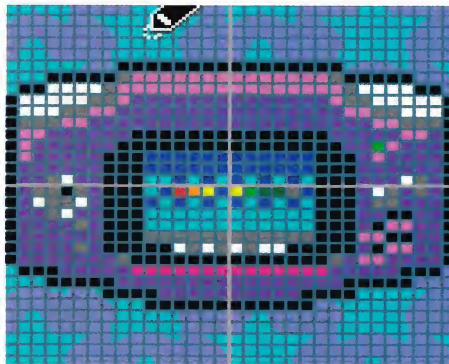
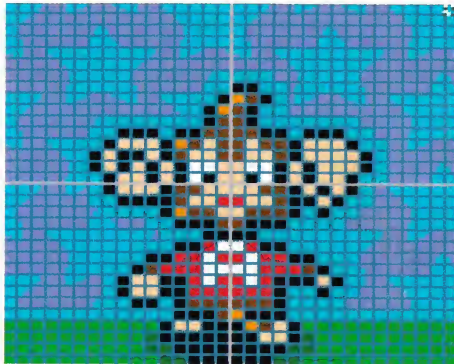
Even the Mushroom Kingdom is mad about modding motors



No one should have to put up with podgy looking Links or skinny Marios. We take avatars very seriously here at NOM and so should you. They're your ID in the Wi-Fi world of Mario Kart DS. They should become known and feared.

We've spent the last month scouring the globe looking for some more great icons that we can wear proudly on our Karts and these are some of the best that we found. We particularly like the GBA and Lakitu icons.

But don't stop with our examples. Go on the internet and check out Spriters Resource and Shy Guy Kingdom. You'll find plenty of inspiration. Why not try a classic, Game & Watch *Donkey Kong* sprite or maybe even your own favourite Pokémon? If those don't take your fancy, don't forget our Against Quitters avatar from last month. Fight the good fight. Thanks are due to The Spriters Resource, CaptainN.net, Shadow Hylian, Badassbill, Sblaka, Rogultgot, Drshnaps, Black Lightning, DanielSidney, Waveth and Bacon.



Mario Kart takes first in Japan

Even the launch of a new console can't stop the kart king



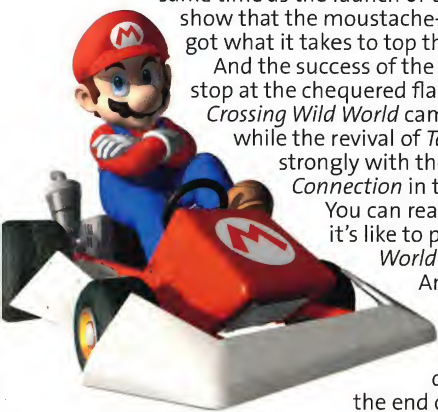
The potent mixture of edge-of-yer-seat racing action and online play is proving too good a tonic for Japanese gamers as the launch of *Mario Kart* saw the Nintendo DS storm both hardware and software charts at the end of 2005.

The latest version of Hideki Konno's classic series sold nearly 300,000 copies in its first week, a massive number in its own right, but considering it went on sale at the same time as the launch of the Xbox 360 it goes to show that the moustache-toting plumber has still got what it takes to top the charts.

And the success of the Nintendo DS doesn't stop at the chequered flag. The brilliant *Animal Crossing Wild World* came a close second, while the revival of *Tamagotchi* figured strongly with the arrival of *Tamagotchi Connection* in the top ten.

You can read our thoughts on what it's like to play *Animal Crossing Wild World* online over on page 44.

And don't forget to put aside that money you got for Christmas, K. K. Slider and Blathers are due on these shores at the end of March. Can't wait!



■ *Mario Kart DS*: we love it, you love it and, it seems, all of Japan loves it too



■ Surprised he can see past with back hair like that in the way

We Can't Wait For...

NEW SUPER MARIO BROS.

The last few months have seen a load of Mario games launch on GameCube and GBA, and with this month's *Mario & Luigi 2* on DS you're in for the first gaming treat of '06. Yet there's one game we haven't seen much of since E3 – the brand new *Super Mario Bros.* platformer for the DS which we hope will launch some time this year.

We're so excited about this game that we managed to track down these screenshots of Mario's next big platform outing, just for you. From what we know you can expect a huge variety of different worlds including deserts and castles, plus you can take the plunge as you swim among stingrays and sharks.



MARIO & LUIGI

SUPERSTAR SAGA





cut along the dotted line to release your awesome NOM poster

High riser

Sega goes into the property business

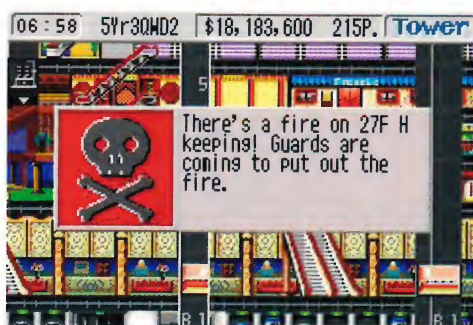
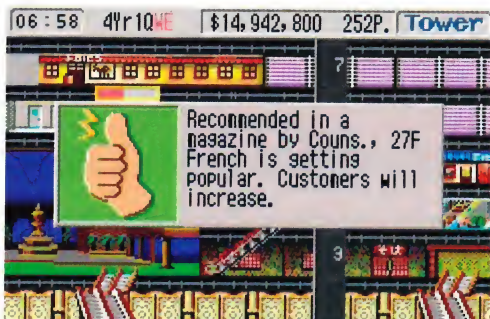


You may remember several issues ago we wrote about a game called *The Tower* in *BIJ*. It was quite a fun game in which you had to manage a skyscraper full of homes and businesses, while avoiding attacks from giant gorillas that insist on climbing your tower. OK, the bit about gorillas isn't true, but the rest is.

Well now Sega of America has announced it'll be publishing the obscure sim game over in the States. That's quite interesting, because in Japan the game was originally published by Nintendo rather than Sega. Look, it's interesting to us okay, even if it's not that interesting to you.

A Sega spokesman babbled something about the game offering a unique experience and expanding GBA owners' imagination. Although this is actually quite true because when we played *The Tower* we really enjoyed it. Even if it was in Japanese and we couldn't understand how to close the toilets for maintenance.

So if America's getting *The Tower*, does that mean we humble Brits will as well? Well, hopefully. There aren't many great strategy games on GBA and the conversion of *Sim City* was absolutely awful. So keep your fingers on the pulse this year to see when you might be building your own skyscraper.



People dress up for a variety of different reasons. Some want to disguise themselves, others dream to be a fairy princess (Tim) whereas the odd person is just crazy. So, it's up to you to decide what category this pair fit into.

Who?

Paul Fay as a *Resi* Evil cop

Where?

Probably in a pub by the looks of it

Verdict?

One of the best we've seen. If we saw Paul in the street we'd assume the T-Virus had actually been released and it was time to start gunning people down as they walked about. Look out Paul, the shotgun's ready for action.

Embarrassment rating: 1%



Who?

Ethan Watson as Mario

Where?

At his home

Verdict?

That moustache looks like a dead rat. Ethan hasn't got the paunch to be Mario. Next time, try stuffing some more rats up your jumper to get that plumber's stomach. Otherwise it's a decent effort, just make sure you get a rabies shot.

Embarrassment rating: 27%



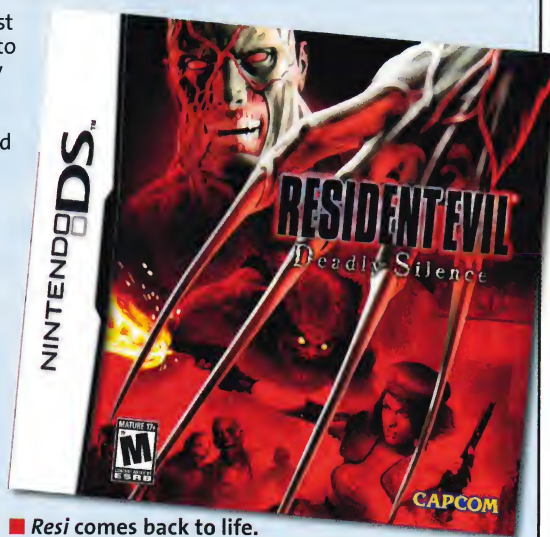
Boxing zombies

The cheesiest game ever is lurching this way soon

You've got to love the original *Resident Evil*. Just like one of the game's zombies it just refuses to die. After the remake on 'Cube we were pretty sure it would never resurface again. But you turn your back for one second and suddenly your DS is going RRRRRRRUUUUURRRGH and trying to bite your neck. Fan-bloody-tastic.

If you're a *Resi* fan you'll no doubt be very excited to hear there's a brand new trailer online, right now. It's on the Japanese Capcom website, so don't be scared by all the foreign letters. They won't bite. If you want to see the game in action, then head to http://www.capcom.co.jp/ds_bio and click on the movie link. Next, just wait for it to download and you can watch all the cheesy action at your leisure.

And as if that wasn't enough, we've also got a sneak peek at the American box art. Yes, it does look a bit like a *Nightmare on Elm Street* poster, but it's not that bad. *Deadly Silence* will be out early this year, if you fancy playing it AGAIN.



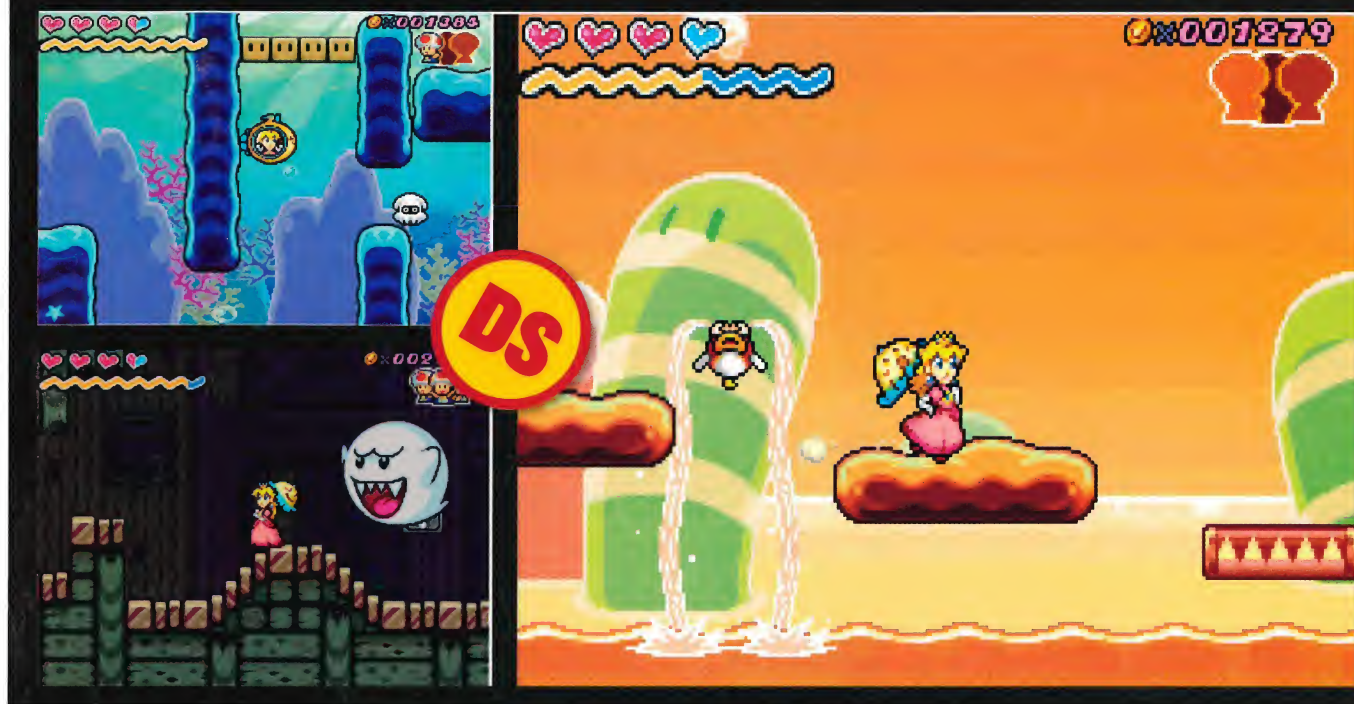
■ *Resi* comes back to life. Again. That's the undead for you

We Can't Wait For...

| SUPER PRINCESS PEACH

If we could have a different mum, we'd love it to be Princess Peach. She'd be good at making cakes, playing tennis and she'd get kidnapped every few years. But we wouldn't ring Mario and get him to rescue her. We'd let her stay kidnapped so we can have all our mates round to eat Pringles and play games FOREVER.

There's still no word on a UK release date yet for *Super Princess Peach* but with the US version due out at the end of February we're saying our prayers every night to ensure it comes here. After finishing the Japanese version we can honestly tell you this is a DS platformer worth crowing about, even if the final battle had Rob's knickers in a twist.



POKÉMON CENTER

The game that no one can pronounce gets a launch across the pond

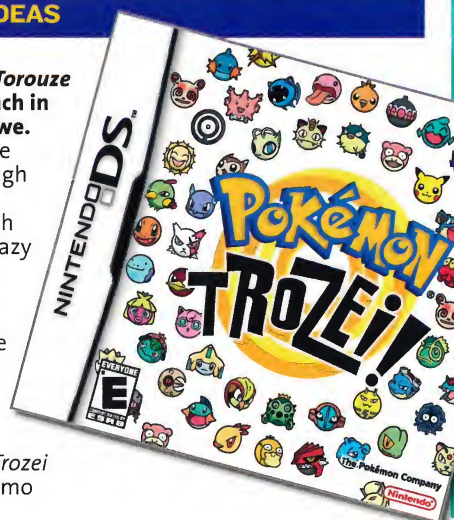
MEW IDEAS

➔ The game formally known as *Pokémon Torouze* has been re-named ready for its US launch in March. Can you work it out? No, neither can we.

The oddly-titled *Pokémon Trozei!* can best be described as Connect 4 with Pokémon, although you can only line them up horizontally or vertically to make them disappear. And as with all *Pokémon* games they've even included a crazy plot just to get you in the mood.

You play Lucy Fleetfoot, a secret agent for Secret Operation League (SOL), who's on a mission to stop the Phobos Battalion and save the stolen Pokémon by lining them up to create a Trozei.

You'll be able to find some of the rarer 360 Pokémon by wirelessly playing with a fellow Pokemaniac and you can spread the word of *Trozei* by letting your mates download a playable demo from your cart.





Tim Street had the **NERVE** to blame me for **NOM** closing down. He said it was something to do with me giving Miyamoto a wet kipper for his Secret Santa present. How dare he? What a load of rubbish.

SEAL'S JOB HUNT

Think a grumpy seal would struggle to find a new job? So did we, until we bought our local paper and found otherwise...

THEME PARK PERFORMER

Do you want to be part of the exciting new George Lucas Theme Park? The Park Entertainments Team is looking for someone to play the role of Jabba the Hutt in a twice daily song and dance show.

A large build is essential for this role, as is any experience of being an interplanetary crime lord. For the right candidate the Entertainments Team would be willing to provide a conveyor belt of fatty food and a space princess in a fetching bikini.

Please apply in writing, along with your typical daily intake to:

George Lucas
Beardy Town
The Ice Planet Hoth

ZOO KEEPER

Ref: SL08

Currently in its design phase, Grimsby Zoo will be the best zoological establishment in North East Lincolnshire. With current plans to include a stuffed monkey, a dog with three legs and a wasp in a bottle, we're keen to expand the zoo into other areas.

Now an exciting opportunity has arisen for a zoo keeper in the seal exhibit. At the moment, we have three very attractive female seals that need round the clock attention. The right candidate will have to feed, bathe and stroke the seals regularly. A thorough knowledge of seal care will be necessary to the role.

Please apply in writing to:
Glenn Fisher, Zoo Manager, Grimsby Zoo, Pyewipe DN31 2SY

Seal Clubbing Monthly – Staff Writer – £14,000 p.a

The past year has been a difficult time for *Seal Clubbing Monthly*. But we're determined not to let the world's only guide to the best nightspots for seals close down.

After a refusal to change our misleading name, we're continuing into 2006 with a new image and a new editorial team. Do you know where all the hip seals hang out? Have you got a contacts book bulging with the numbers of top celebrity seals, like Dewgong or those sea lions from *March of the Penguins*? If you have, we want to hear from you!

Please send your CV and a bucket of fish to:
Mike Jones, Seal Clubbing Monthly, Emap Active, Peterborough PE2 5UW

SENIOR EDITOR

£25,000-£28,000 depending on experience

Seal Monthly is THE up and coming monthly magazine for modern-day seals. Each month we tackle the key seal issues, like how to lose unsightly flab, tusk polishing and all the best fish recipes.

After our last editor was clubbed to death, we're now looking for an enthusiastic editor who can take *Seal Monthly* in new directions for 2006. A passion for chasing penguins is essential, as is experience of being an actual seal.

For an application form and full job description contact admin@sealmonthly.co.uk

NEEDED: Bitter and lonely seals University of Iceland

Required for psychology studies, we need seals who are fed up with life. Qualities needed for the role include a hatred for the world, a surly temperament, a passion for wanting to kill people, disgust towards children and general bitterness.

You will be studied 24 hours a day by students keen to learn all about the temperament of seals. You may also be probed and poked with sharp sticks.

Please email HR@icelanduni.co.ic

EAT FISH CAMPAIGN

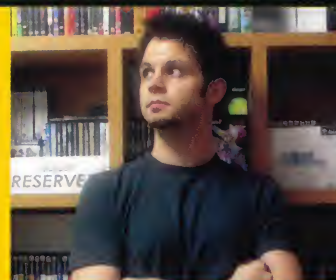
MARKETING OFFICER

Salary dependent upon experience
Baker Street, London

The Eat Fish campaign is now in its fourth year and so far we've been responsible for getting more people to eat more fish than ever before. Even really rubbish fish like sticklebacks have been scoffed by stars including Gwyneth Paltrow and Mel Gibson.

Now, we need a Marketing Officer to come up with key marketing ideas and make sure 2006 is a big year for fish consumption. Do you like fish? Would you be able to cope with the difficult task of sampling at least 50 different fish recipes everyday? Would you know how to drive the popularity of trout through the roof? If so, we want to hear from you. Please ring 02002 77788802 to request an application pack.

BIG IN JAPAN



reporter John Ricciardi

● FAMILICOM UNPLUGGED ● TOP SHOP ● MICRO WARRIOR

FAMILICOM ROCK

Remember 6955, aka Jason DeGroot? Long-time *BIJ* readers may recall him as the guy who got strangled by a hot chick with a *Castlevania* whip in our Tokyo Game Show 2003 coverage. An early pioneer in Tokyo's underground Game Boy music scene, 6955 recently stopped working with Game Boys to start work on an amazing new project that uses a modified Roland TR-606 drum

machine, eight Nintendo Famicoms and an incredible amount of technical ingenuity to create live music.

In order to control the Famicoms, DeGroot modified the TR-606 to output trigger pulses instead of drum sounds, which are then converted to Famicom controller data and used to operate the sound test modes in whichever games are

inserted in the consoles. He even built a "video remote switching multiplexor thing" (his words) so he can instantly switch to any of the Famicoms to monitor its output. Basically, any Famicom game that features a sound test has the potential to be an instrument in one of 6955's live shows! For more info, check out his web site at <http://www.robotandproud.com/6955>.



▲ To the untrained eye this may look like just wires and boxes...



▲ ... but to 6955 it's a Nintendo Famicom-based music machine. Cool!

BEEN THERE, DONE THAT, GOT THE T-SHIRT

Ever wonder where Shigeru Miyamoto gets all those cool Nintendo-related T-shirts he wears to game shows and events? He gets them from The King of Games (<http://www.the-king-of-games.com>).

Based in Kyoto, The King of Games creates official Nintendo shirts using themes from a variety of Nintendo games and hardware, both current and classic. New designs of the popular shirts are regularly introduced, and come in a sweet replica Famicom cartridge box with a certificate of authenticity. Sega fans take note – they just kicked off a new line of official Sega T-shirts as well, the first of which is based on the arcade classic, *Space Harrier*.



▲ Miyamoto-spec T-shirts are some of the coolest we've ever seen





FINAL FANTASY MICRO

If you thought the Famicom Game Boy Micro was the hottest handheld ticket in town, think again. On 15 December, Square Enix released a limited edition *Final Fantasy IV Advance* deluxe set with a navy blue Game Boy Micro and custom faceplate designed by renowned FF artist Yoshitaka Amano. Simply beautiful!



IT WAS CHRISTMAS!

Believe it or not, the Japanese have Christmas too in December, which meant two things: 1) Christmas trees, and 2) giant penguins! Actually, penguins have nothing to do with Christmas in Japan, but this guy looked lonely standing out in the cold, and he reminded us of the giant penguin from *Super Mario 64*.



THE AD GALLERY

THE LATEST ADS FROM JAPANESE GAMING MAGS...



Akihabara WATCH

The GBA remake of *Final Fantasy IV* is all the rage these days. This display in one Tokyo store caught our eye – notice anything strange? Someone needs spilling lossosn!

► *Final Fantasy IV*, soon to be joined by *Mario Kart DS*, perhaps?

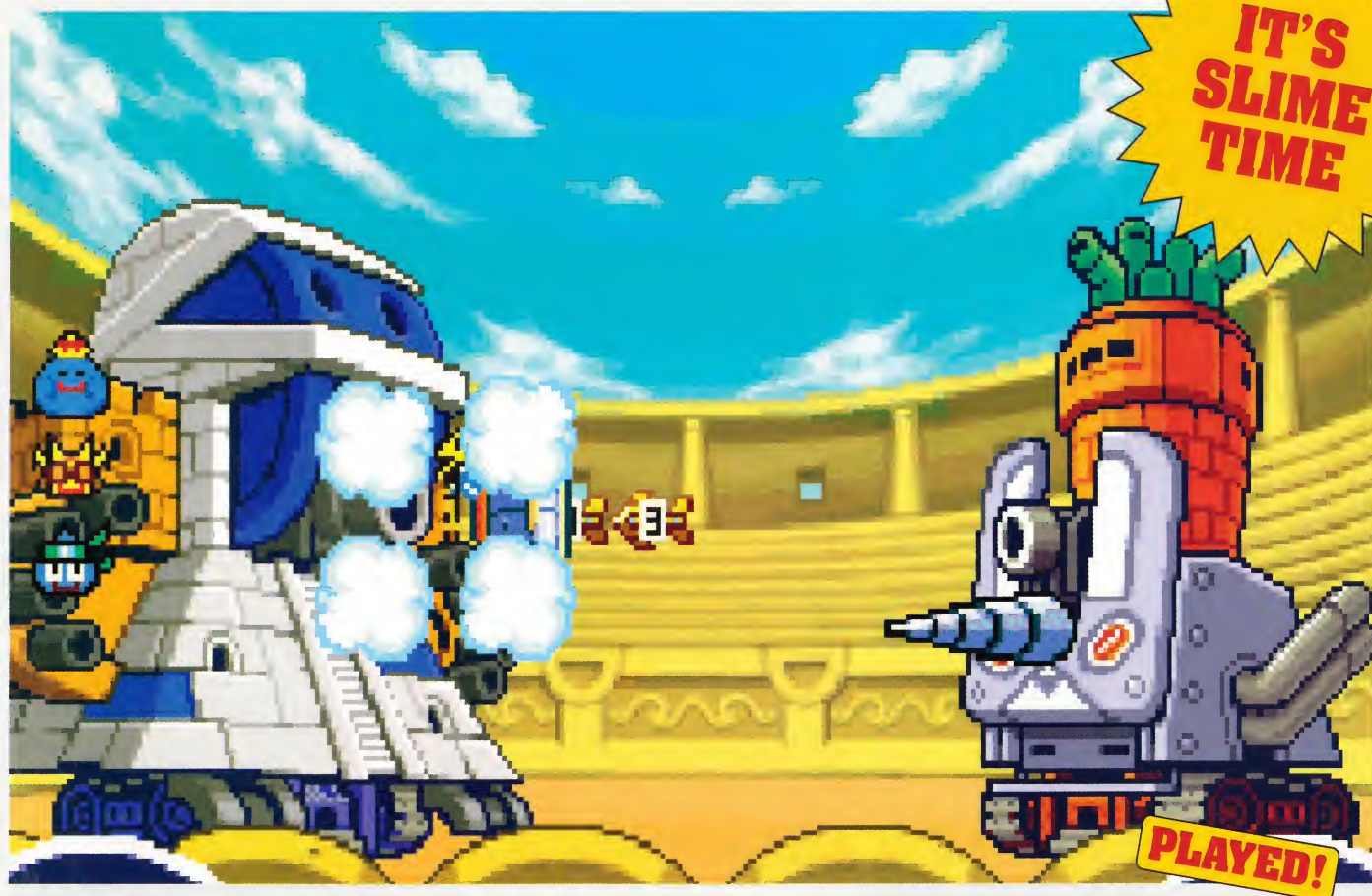


JAPAN TOP TEN

The current best-selling games on Nintendo platforms in Japan

1	MARIO KART DS	(NINTENDO, DS)
2	ANIMAL CROSSING: WILD WORLD	(NINTENDO, DS)
3	POKÉMON MYSTERIOUS DUNGEON: RESCUE TEAM BLUE	(NINTENDO, DS)
4	POKÉMON MYSTERIOUS DUNGEON: RESCUE TEAM RED	(NINTENDO, GBA)
5	TAMAGOTCHI NO PUCHI PUCHI OMISECCHI	(BANDAI, DS)
6	NOU WO KITAERU OTONA NO DS TRAINING	(NINTENDO, DS)
7	YAWARAKA ATAMA JUKU	(NINTENDO, DS)
8	BLEACH GC: TASOGARE NI MAMIERU SHINIGAMI	(SEGA, GC)
9	MUSHI KING: ROAD TO GREATEST CHAMPION DS	(SEGA, DS)
10	MARIO PARTY 7	(NINTENDO, GC)

Source: Medicreate, week ending 11 December 2005



Slime Mori Mori Dragon Quest 2



The slimes have oozed their way into our hearts. They've clogged up our arteries with goopy gunk and caused the blood in our brains to turn a strange green colour. We knew Japan had been brainwashed by the mighty slimes, but we just weren't expecting it to happen in the UK too. Soon the whole world will just become one gigantic blob of slime. Be afraid, be very afraid.

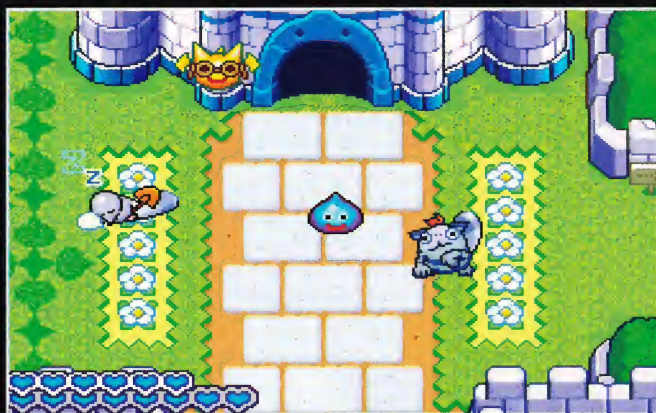
Well, until the day our highly viscous slime friends take over we thought we'd tell you about their latest game, *Slime Mori Mori Dragon Quest 2*. This is without doubt our favourite *Big in Japan* game for quite some time. It certainly ranks alongside *Ouendan* for our best Crazy Japan Game of last year.

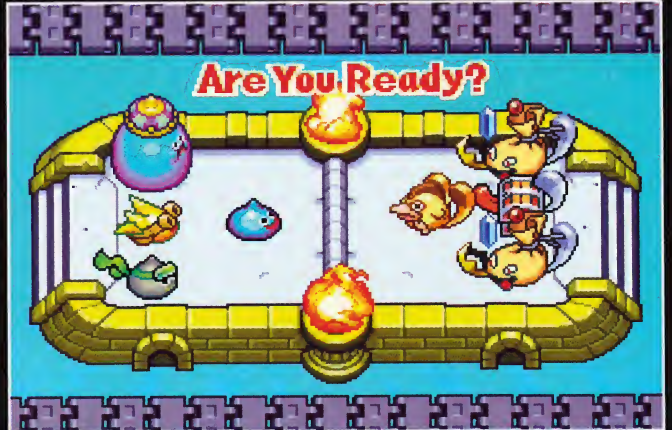
As you may or may not know, the *Dragon Quest* series is bigger than *King Kong* in Japan. It's a hugely successful RPG game that has yet to make the move across the oceans. *Slime Mori Mori* is actually a spin-off from the series, in which you play one of the enemy slimes. To us they seem like the cutest enemy in existence. We can't imagine killing one. It'd be like slowly bludgeoning a kitten to death with a plastic spoon.

The slimes, although cute, are actually pretty versatile. They can stretch themselves out, float, bounce, snap towards enemies, carry things on their head and even drive tanks bigger than a house. Oh yes, the tanks. One of the new features in this sequel are the tank battles. They're absolutely incredible.

Basically, you square off against another equally massive tank, that's driven by enemy characters. You then have to run around the inside of your tank collecting items that shoot out of chutes, then load them into your cannons. At first it's a massive dash as you try to cover both floors of your tank by yourself. But soon you'll have three slime helpers who will either load the cannons or shoot themselves across to the enemy tank to start causing trouble.

It's incredibly addictive and playing is actually a bit like playing *Minish Cap*, as you explore new areas and solve puzzles. It's just such a tragic shame that *Slime Mori Mori* will never be released here. If it does, we'll eat some slime. And that's an *NOM* promise.





GREAT TO ROTATE



Rotate Game

PLAYED!



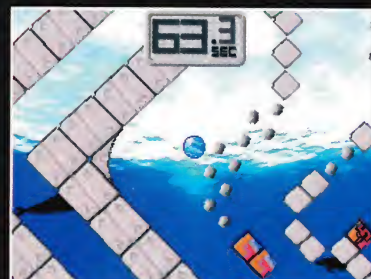
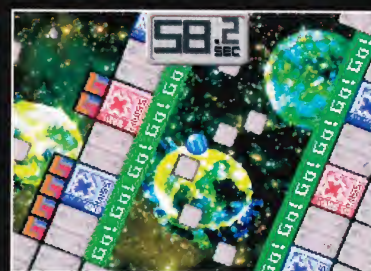
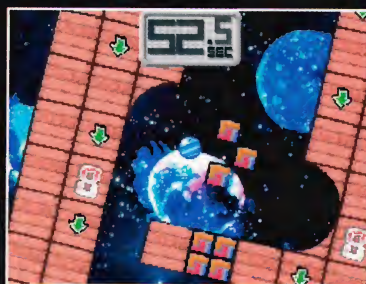
When developers first saw the DS, their minds must have been buzzing with all the possibilities of the touch screen. Images of drawing entire worlds must have flashed past their eyes. The thought of stroking magic animals would have dazzled and delighted them. So what crazy idea did Taito come up with? Well, it's a bit like one of those wooden Victorian mazes you get with a marble inside. Great.

Actually, it's not as bad as it sounds. You use the stylus to turn the maze round and round, so the falling marble can slowly make its way to the exit. If we said it reminded us of *Super Monkey Ball*, you'd probably think we'd gone completely insane. But it does have that similar feeling. The marble always stays in the centre of the maze, while you rotate everything around it. The ball never actually travels anywhere really, the surrounding maze does all the hard work.

Things start off pretty easy, as you grasp the basics of maze travel. But once you get a few levels in, the difficulty increases dramatically. Obstacles start to appear in your way and they're generally more irritating than an irritating fox. You'll have to smash through blocks, avoid traps and still beat the level in a decent time. This is made even harder by evil blocks that, when touched, add seconds to your overall time.

The levels also get more fiendish in their design. The first few are fairly straightforward, but once you get past the training levels, the courses take a nasty turn. Many have multiple routes and not all lead to the exit. It's a real nuisance when you plough through what you think is the correct way, only to discover you're nowhere near the exit.

We think it's unlikely this will get a release over here. Although *Rising Star* does have a "special" relationship with Taito, so perhaps it'll pick this up.



PUPPETS NOT MUPPETS

2 COMBO!



Kojinki no Gashbell



Fighting games are great, aren't they? People in an arena, punching each other in the face is one of life's little pleasures. Throw some fireballs in there and you're guaranteed a great time. We'd pay serious money to see Ryu go up against Akuma. At least £4 – AT LEAST. But what happens if you're a wimp? What happens if the thought of fighting turns your stomach and causes you to go dizzy? Then get magical puppets to fight for you, of course.

We're pretty sure that's the principal of *Gashbell*. We could probably look it up on the internet, but our misinformed ramblings are probably more interesting. So, you've got these magical puppets and they're fighting for the prestigious Golden George Foreman Lean Mean Fat Grilling Machine. George Foreman isn't one of the puppets. He watches from the sidelines eating burnt steak.

Anyway, the puppets. Fighting with them seems fairly easy. It's more like your typical side-scrolling beat-'em-up really. You can get through most fights by just pummelling **A**, which unleashes powerful combos on your opponent. You also have puppets that help you in times of need. They jump onto the screen, do some fancy prancing about, then jump off again. Without a string in sight.

The puppets are a strange crowd. One appears to be a horse wearing armour, another is a little girl and one is man shaped like a V. They're horrible puppets, really. If you turned up at a child's party with one, you'd probably be arrested. Actually you'd definitely be arrested if the puppets started kicking off and fighting. So... is *Gashbell* likely to come to the UK? Well maybe. The 'Cube version has been slated for a US release, so you never know.



Previews





Forget that bloody Robosapien that people were going bonkers about before Christmas. That's just useless compared to the robot we played with over Christmas. This one tidies up mess, clears spillages, flies (well, glides) and fights killer robotic spiders. His name is Chibi and you should be welcoming him into your homes some time this year. Fingers crossed.

When *Chibi Robo* was first announced last year, the excitement at *NOM* built spontaneously. If we had a graph it would have gone from zero to 100% the very second we caught a glimpse of the game's first screenshot. The style of it just reminded us so much of other very Japanese games we love so much, like *Kururin* or *Pikmin*. And the idea of controlling a robot that was just a few inches high was almost too much to comprehend. Our graph by this point would have exploded with anticipation. It's that good.

Chibi Robo

Smaller than Pikachu, cuter than *Nintendogs* but as tactical as *Metroid*. Welcome to the world of Chibi.

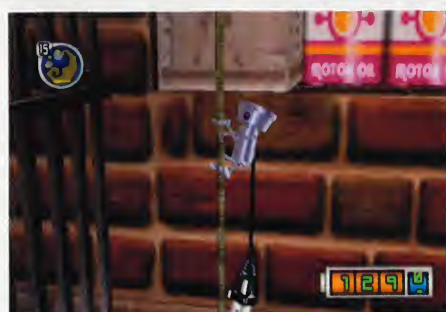
But we were concerned *Chibi Robo* may never see the light of day over here. The game will be released in America next month and we're hoping it'll do really well because then the chances of a UK release will increase. Looking at the screenshots or even reading our descriptions so far may not have your eyes popping out with interest. But you should follow the progress of this game with

eager anticipation and we're here to tell you why. Sit back and pay attention.

Chibi is a birthday present for a little girl called Jenny, who has an obscure passion for frogs. In fact, she only communicates through a series of ribbitts and croaks. Which is a bit tragic. Chibi is the latest in robot design and must have cost an absolute bomb. They were probably being sold on eBay for ten times their actual amount on the day of release. Once Chibi arrives in the home it's his quest to keep the family happy, by doing chores, and ultimately become the number one Chibi Robo in Japan. Not an easy task.

You're probably thinking so far, so sickeningly cute... but wait. Underneath the fluffy pink exterior of this heart-warming tale lurks a darker beast. And as you progress through the game, you'll see everything is not what it seems within the family. The mum and dad are going through financial difficulties and dad's purchase of Chibi is only putting more strain on a relationship already at breaking point. Dad's even sleeping on the sofa as Chibi potters about around him picking up litter.

The dark story and often dark humour is a decent indication this is a game that shouldn't be judged by its cover. We've already compared it to *Metroid* and, as ridiculous as this may sound, it's actually true. When you first arrive in the house you're limited to one room. Which is fine when you're getting used to the



''' controls but soon you'll get a taste for adventure. So how do you get out the room? One door is blocked by a cuddly caterpillar and another door is guarded by toy soldiers who shoot at you. Oh yeah, the toys inside the house are actually alive. Just like all houses in Japan.

So, just like *Metroid* or *Zelda*, you need upgrades or new items to get through inaccessible areas. To get past the caterpillar you need an outfit that makes you look like a superhero she's in love with. Once she sees your muscle-bound appearance she legs it. Whereas to avoid the attacking toy soldiers you need to put a cup on your head that protects you from their bullets. Inspired. Each new item you collect will either let you access a new area or help one of the toys that's in trouble.

So far we've had a couple of favourite toys that we've come across. The commander of the toy soldiers is like something out of *Apocalypse Now*. He obsessively trains his troops for combat, which seems unlikely to happen. But later in the game you learn he's actually training his troops because when they first arrived in the house, one soldier was attacked and eaten by the family's dog. Another fave is a wooden pirate who hit the sauce after he lost his ship and crew. Once again, although it's a game featuring toys, their lives couldn't be any further from the glitzy fun life of Woody and the gang in *Toy Story*.



❑ 'I might look like a mug to you'



The toys only come out at night because they don't want the family to know they're actually alive. So each room you enter will normally contain a new toy for you to meet. The actual house, although small for humans, is massive for Chibi. A sofa becomes a huge mountain he must scale and a dangling light switch is a rope he can climb. The sense of scale is incredibly impressive, but what's better is that as time goes along you can see more and more of the house.

When you first leave your little robotic home in the corner of the living room, it seems like an entire world. But at first you can really only go along the floor and climb up the odd thing. When you open the kitchen though, there are more opportunities to

get higher. The first time you get on top of the kitchen counter, it's like you've scaled Everest. The sense of achievement is great and the game rewards you by letting you potter around the sink and cooker. As the game progresses the sense of scale increases, with Chibi being able to climb higher and higher thanks to some special robotic ladders. Soon, you won't even believe when you first started you could only walk around the floor.

The ladder is just one of the inventions available to Chibi. He's a clever little chap who can turn anything into something useful. The first tool you get is a toothbrush that can clean up spillages. But soon you'll have an arsenal of different items including a spoon that acts as

a spade, a special helicopter that pops out Chibi's head like Inspector Gadget and even a gun. Now, don't worry Chibi doesn't go on a toy killing spree with the gun, the game isn't that dark. No, he uses it to kill evil robotic spiders that prey on Chibi Robos. The spider encounters are fantastic and their arrival is greeted by a blast of rock each time they appear.

The metal-loving spiders are just one of the examples of the game's attention to music. We've never played something which had been infused with so many different musical directions. Which is weird considering there isn't actually a soundtrack. Instead Chibi plays music as he walks but it changes depending upon the surface he's on and how

Bad bots

Chibi's got his work cut out to make robots nice again

Not all robots are nice, you know. Yes, Chibi may have charmed the toast out of our pockets but some robots wouldn't be so happy to clean up the litter. They'd probably use it to build some kind of

human-destroying mega cannon. In fact, they're probably doing it right now, as we type. The end is clearly in sight. Repent and pledge your allegiance to our new robotic masters.



❑ The most evil robot we can imagine. His cannon isn't for killing robotic spiders.



❑ They look like blokes in costumes... oh, they are blokes in costumes. Scrap this one.



❑ The biggest robot we know. Climbing a bookshelf wouldn't be a problem for him.

Robots in disguise Chibi's got more than meets the eye ya know

As Chibi meets more toys and helps them, they'll sometimes give him different outfits to wear. Putting them on and parading around the house in front of toys or people will actually have

different effects. Although we've only got three at the moment, we assume there'll be a Deku Scrub and Tanooki Suit later in the game. If not, there's going to be trouble. Grrrrrr.



❑ Is it a robotic bird? Is it a robotic plane? No it's Chibi dressed as some kind of super-bot.



❑ Oh dear this is what happens when Chibi runs out of energy. We use it to get sympathy.



❑ Yes! This basically confirms our assumption there'll be a Tanooki Suit. There MUST be.

fast he's running. This means even little things like running from a carpet to a tiled surface prompt a change of soundtrack. You could even try to make your own mixes by running across a variety of surfaces, then using the toothbrush. Actually, the toothbrush is probably our favourite item because when you use it, a little acoustic jazzy guitar accompanies it. Beautiful.

In fact a lot of love and attention has been poured into *Chibi Robo* by developer Skip. Each room looks a lot different to the last and it's almost like the differences between the temples

in *Zelda* games. Seriously. Getting into mum and dad's room feels like you've really accomplished something. Particularly when you consider that to get into the room Chibi has to scale the beads of a wind charm. Jenny's room is full of toys and a huge castle, in which there's actually a princess for Chibi to rescue. There's even a garden to explore and a basement. Which means there are at least seven different rooms to explore, each full of shelves, boxes and lamps that Chibi can shuffle up. You need to start praying this gets a release over here. The last thing we need is another *Animal*



Crossing and with the Revolution on the horizon it's likely Nintendo may just not decide to release it for the 'Cube which is now

winding down. Few games are so charming to play and that offer such a

sense of accomplishment when you reach a new area. Yes, it may look like a game for little girls when they're not playing Barbie. But get past the cute exterior and into the exquisite gameplay and you'll see Chibi can easily hold his own alongside Link and Samus.

Rob Burman



❑ It might all look rather Barbie-fied, but trust us, Chibi has a far darker story to tell

ESSENTIALS

DEVELOPER: SKIP

FAMOUS FOR:

Making *Giftpia*, another game we were promised but never got a release. If that happens with *Chibi Robo* we're storming the Nintendo castle. Are you with us?

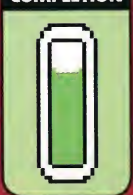
MULTIPLAYER: _____ NO

PUBLISHER: _____ NINTENDO

RELEASE: _____ TBC

REVIEW: _____ TBC

THE PHIAL OF COMPLETION



PREDICTED SCORE

Each time we play we find some new secret or little touch that has us beaming with joy. If *Chibi Robo*'s released it'll be an essential purchase.

90%
PLUS



Super Monkey Ball Touch & Roll

More fun than a drunken chimp on rollerskates at a tea party.



Look at all the beautiful levels. These are what you'll be carefully inching your way through next year. *Monkey Ball* is back, well it's going to be back, and it's time for your hand-sweating

to start all over again. Best dig out those special towels you had to wipe up the moisture.

Some levels are brand new, whereas others you'll recognise from *Super Monkey Ball 1* or *2*. Anyway, we don't really mind which game they're

from, they're all a lot of fun. Some are so hard we turned into raging monsters. Take a look at them and start plotting your way through them... right now. Do you try to dash over the gaps? Is it best to just keep it safe? Tilt the magazine and

pretend you're playing. Go on, it's not sad and weird at all... Unlike the GBA version, which sacrificed the tight controls of the original, this DS version is far more intuitive and easier to play. We can't wait to play the UK one later this year.

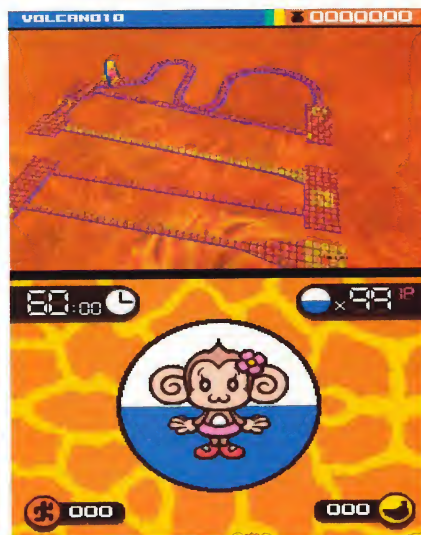
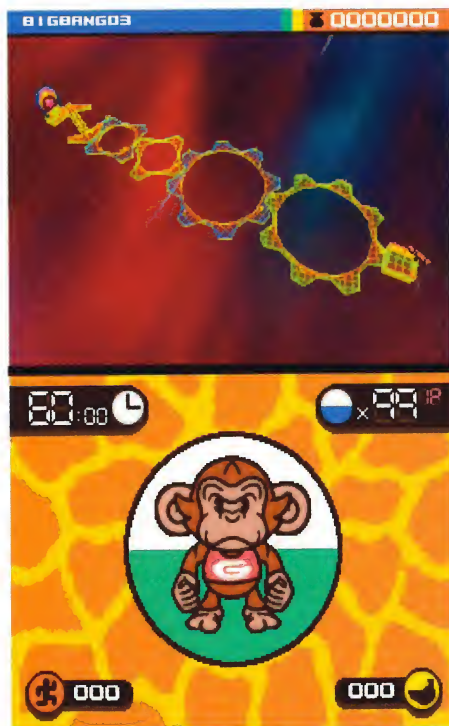




❑ A classic level from previous *Monkey Balls*. Even with the stylus control you can still whip across the holes dead fast



❑ This is definitely one of the trickiest levels. All the lifts zoom around and you've got to try and creep across them. Tough



ESSENTIALS

DEVELOPER: SEGA
FAMOUS FOR: All sorts. Perhaps soon it'll put Sonic in a ball as wall. *Super Sonic Ball* is bound to happen one day.


MULTIPLAYER: 1-4
PUBLISHER: SEGA
RELEASE: TBC
REVIEW: TBC

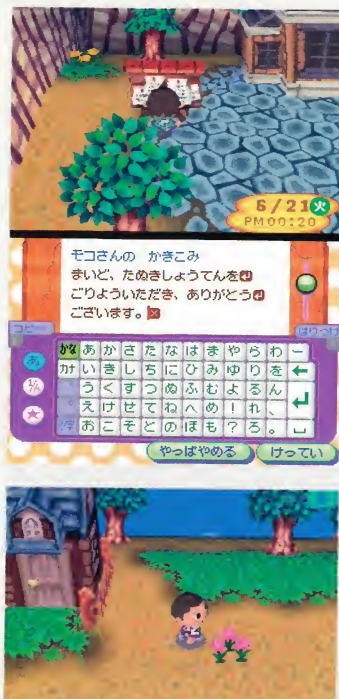
PREDICTED SCORE

Some of *NOM* were sceptical about the touch screen controls, but after a while you start to understand it all and it begins to make beautiful sense.

80% PLUS

THE PHIAL OF COMPLETION





Animal Crossing Wild World

Gaming delights await those who go online with *Animal Crossing*.



Plunder. Ponder that word for a moment. Plunder, originated from the German word *plündern*, which means, vaguely, 'household goods'. There are a lot of those in *Animal Crossing*. Lots. Thousands, maybe, we lost count. Dictionary.com, bless its

free and accessible electronic heart, defines plunder as: "To seize wrongfully or by force; steal." There are many famous instances of plunder, usually during times of war, but not always. For instance, in the early 19th Century, one Thomas Bruce, 7th Earl of Elgin, orchestrated the removal

of several ancient marble sculptures from the Parthenon in Athens. It was all done legally, of course, for the good Earl was a dignified nobleman and diplomat, and war is a messy, messy thing. But history has called this an act of plunder, and Greece is still slightly miffed at the whole affair.

It's the very early morning of a very late day in December of 2005. Too damned early. The sun isn't even out yet. I may not know who I am at this hour, but there are two things I do know: someone who calls himself Hammer leaves his DS on while he sleeps, with

Super Models

The web has a TON of *Animal Crossing* stuff FOR SALE

The internet is good for loads of stuff – chatting to your mates when you're bored on holiday, tunes for your iPod and searching out that sweet piece of Nintendo goodies.

If you're an *Animal Crossing* fanatic there's more to life than just getting a second hand copy off eBay. There are towns and toys to

collect, y'know. And they aren't girly in a Barbie kinda way, these sets would look mint in any collection.

We managed to sniff some out on <http://www.toysnjoys.com> and <http://www.wizzywig.com>. They're by a company called Takara, just so you know.



□ The last remaining *NOM* team members...



□ ... these are the houses they lived in...



□ ... and the cop shop they knew so well



□ The store detective could have gone for a more subtle outfit

the gates to his *Animal Crossing* town, Weston, wide open for visitors. And due to time zone differences, Weston is two hours ahead of me, which means that his shops are just about to open.

Groggily, awkwardly, I reach for the DS next to my bed and start a game. I walk to the town gates, digging up a weed along the way, and Copper, the gatekeeper who just happens to be a dog, commends me for being up so early. I tell him to open the gates for me; I want to leave. He obliges, after a few mysterious formalities that, apparently, involve synching up the DS with my internet connection. Soon, the gates are open, and I'm on my way.

Hammer's still asleep, as I knew he would be. The town's

empty and lifeless, because animals automatically head home when the town gates are open. I head for Weston's shopping district, consisting of exactly two stores: Nookway, a store for tools, furniture, and other assorted goods, and Able Sisters, a designer clothes shop. These stores see new, limited stock daily, and once their items are sold, that's it for the day. With what amounts to chump change in my rapidly growing stockpile of Bells, the game's currency, I clean out what I want from both shops: a pirate hat, a pair of pink glasses, a cactus, and a fancy chair, leaving them both practically empty. As I head back out, I throw on the pirate hat, steal a couple fresh apples, and head back home, leaving him



□ Surely she's a little too young to be out on her own...

with nothing and myself with absolutely everything.

This isn't plundering. I'm no thief, Hammer, just a collector like yourself. Welcome to the Wild World, and thanks for the pirate hat.

Now, before you freak out and start safeguarding your Robo Chair, realise that Hammer was intentionally inviting looters. Opening your precious town to visitors is an involved process, full of safeguards. For one thing, opening your town's gates is a very specific request, involving a

number of dialogue boxes and procedures. They don't open on their own, you have to want it.

And second, only your so-called 'friends' whom you specifically have on your list, are granted access.

The only way for a stealthy thief to come and plunder your village is if you very specifically allow them to, and

Hammer, bless him, is a trusting soul who leaves his gates open all night, to keep things interesting.

Animal Crossing: Wild World has two online modes: one for leaving town, and one for inviting people in. Both require the same basic procedure, which is walking to the town gates, talking to Copper, and telling him what you want to do.

When you tell Copper you want to leave, he'll ask if you want to connect to Nintendo WFC. And, of course, you do. He'll save your game, and then spend some time actually connecting your DS to the internet and



□ 'I haven't caught a bloody thing. Fancy going down the boozier for a pint and a game of dominos?'



» searching through your friends list for open towns.

Again, and this is important, you can only visit your friends' towns. And you have to be mutual friends. You have to acquire your friend's character and town names, and their special numerical Friends Code, and they have to do the same. Assuming any of your friends have their gates open, Copper will present you with a list of towns you may visit. Actually, even if none of your friends have gates open, Copper will still present you with a list; an empty list, which is slightly annoying, and a sad reminder of just how few friends you have in the world. Poor dear. Opening your own gates is a very similar procedure. Copper will set things up, get you online, and send you back on your merry way.

Up to four players, including the town owner, can be in one town at a time. And as mentioned before, all of the town's animal neighbours hide in their homes when there are visitors, because apparently the DS can't handle all that action at the same time. Luckily, you can still interact with the little chaps by visiting their homes. You can hold conversations, give and receive gifts, and even write them psychotic letters confessing your true love for them (and how your love means that you must kill them in their



□ We'd be unhappy with an umbrella that colour

sleep). And – here's the cool part – they'll remember you forever, and they may even tell other people about you.

Oh, but it gets more exciting than that, yes it does! Animal neighbours tend to pack up and move to other towns. Which means that Puddles the frog (that hot piece of ass) might,

after your love affair goes sour, move on and tell people – real people, on the internet – about all the weird crap you did when she was your neighbour. Write some crazy letters, send her some anthrax in the mail, and she may one day end up telling someone about it. Immortality is yours!



□ Fancy Chris Evans turning up in *Animal Crossing*!

Also new to *Wild World* is the chat window. When visiting town, you can speak in real time to other players! Typing with the touch screen takes forever, though, and because lines of dialogue are so limited, you'll be seeing "i take ur apples" and "fu nook" a lot more often than "Hello, there! May I take some apples home with me?" and "Boy, that shop owner, Tom Nook, sure does overcharge on furniture, wouldn't you say?"

Essentially, the online function as it is MEANT to be isn't much more than a novel addition that gets old kind of quickly. Once you've harvested one of each fruit in your town, there aren't a whole lot of reasons to venture out anymore, unless you really have this strong desire to hold conversations with foreign



□ New Porsche needs some work



□ "Sorry luv, you're not on the list"



□ That's easy for you to say...

Hit the Bottle

Let K.K. down Bacardi Breezer, then send a message

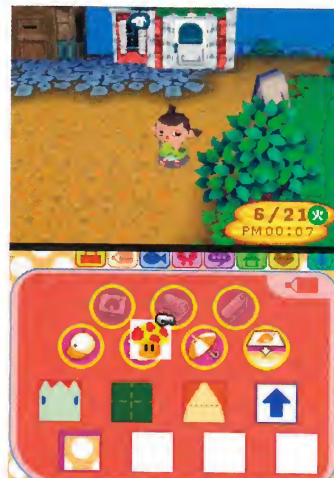
Mr. Slider is the coolest character in *Animal Crossing*. Kapp'n comes close but a Dalmatian playing a guitar? It's cool alright? There are no arguments, so there.

K.K. is so cool that he's given us a bit of advice about sending messages to another local *Animal Crossing* user.

All you need to do is write the message you want to send on a scrap of paper, stick it in a bottle and lob it into the ocean. Talk to Rover and you can set up Tag mode – once done he'll tell you when a reply is sitting on the beach. How cool is that?



□ Tramp's favoured method of communication is a corking idea



□ Seven minutes past midnight and it's not dark. How weird



❑ "I had this bloke in my cab the other day"



❑ The cowboy pavers had left their mark



❑ Go on sea, give us a wave

animals. The real fun comes when you get creative.

For example, I have a little game I like to play called "psychotic axe murderer," and it goes something like this. First, I save up a few Pitfall Seeds, which are seeds you plant in the ground that, when stepped on, force your character to fall in a hole for a few seconds. They're ultimately useless for actual gameplay, but for being a psychotic axe murderer, they're

key. So what I do, see, is plant a few of them right at my town's entrance, and surround them with sweet, delicious pears, which happen to be my town's native fruit. Then, I pull out my axe, wear something decidedly crazy looking (I go for the Grandpa Hat, Thick Glasses and Tuxedo myself, but you may vary this as you please), open up the town gates, and hide.

Now, this may require some patience, but eventually



❑ Four pear trees and not a single partridge? We've been ripped off!



❑ "You should have seen the one that got away – it was a monster!"

someone's going to come in. At this point, I open up my dialogue box and type in something crazy (try "YAAAAHAHAHAHA") and wait. As soon as I hear the tell-tale sound that my victim has fallen in, I yell whatever it is I typed, and run from behind the tree, swinging my axe at them as they sit helplessly trapped. This doesn't actually DO anything, of course. You can't hurt anyone in this game. But I tell you something, it's funny as hell.

to address most of the issues anyone may have had with the original *Animal Crossing*. Build up enough of a friends list, and that feeling of lonely isolation will disappear entirely. Having a hard time finding that specific item you desperately need? Build up a sense of community with your friends and trade, trade, trade. No longer must you rely on Tom Nook's mysteriously random shipments. Hell, with a little extra effort, you can set up shop yourself, if you really want to. I'd rather pretend to hit someone with a blunt instrument myself, but that's just me. **Frank Cifaldi**

At the end of the day, this new online aspect does tend



❑ He had to bury the body somewhere, otherwise somebody was bound to find out...

ESSENTIALS

DEVELOPER: NINTENDO

FAMOUS FOR:

Already giving us some amazing online moments with *Mario Kart*. Now get set for *Animal Crossing* and *Metroid Prime Hunters* later this year.

MULTIPLAYER: 1-4

PUBLISHER: NINTENDO

RELEASE: MARCH 31

REVIEW: TBC

THE PHIAL OF COMPLETION



PREDICTED SCORE

Start saving human Bells. Thirty are going to bag one of the best games for DS. Don't bother and Resetti will tunnel into your house and get angry.

90%
PLUS



Final Fantasy IV Advance

Take a classic game, add some extras, and you're onto a winner



It's been nearly 15 years since this game made its first appearance and it's had plenty of re-issues since.

The reason why? It's *Final Fantasy* at its very best and now it's winging its way to the GBA. But rather than just being a boring re-issue, *FFIV Advance* has been given a few tweaks to make it even better.

Not that you'd want too much changed, because it was already a gaming masterpiece the first time around. Those of you out there who are *FF* veterans are going to want some new challenges though, so how does some new bosses to take on and two brand new dungeons sound? Not too shabby when you consider that nothing has been cut from the original in terms of look or story. You could even argue that the plot has been improved because Square has gone back to the original Japanese version and translated it again.

What a great story too. You take reluctant Dark Knight (and

unfortunately named) Cecil, commander of the legendary Red Wings, on a journey of redemption and self-sacrifice trying to discover what is causing monsters to invade the land. On top of this, your king is getting more and more paranoid and your wife thinks you're a coward for not standing up to him. There's more drama here than the Christmas editions of *EastEnders* and *Coronation Street* combined.

Fortunately *FFIV* isn't all talk. The battle system isn't confined to slow turn-based tactics as you can switch to a real-time system instead. This makes battles much faster and really tests your reactions. It doesn't take out the tactics completely as you'll discover when you clash with the Mist Dragon early on. Jumping in headfirst doesn't always do you much good. This adds a little more difficulty, which can only be a good thing considering how long this game has been about.

RPGs have come on a long way since *FFIV* so it has nowhere near the complexity of more recent titles. That's

no reason to dismiss it though as it still has plenty to offer. *Advance* is a flawless conversion of the original game with more than enough to lure back old fans and enchant new ones. **Jonathan Gordon**



ESSENTIALS

DEVELOPER: SQUARE
FAMOUS FOR:

Creators of some of the all-time great RPGs from *Front Mission* to *Dragon Quest* and the quite brilliant *Chrono Trigger*.

THE PHIAL OF COMPLETION



MULTIPLAYER: _____ NO
PUBLISHER: _____ NINTENDO
RELEASE: _____ EARLY 2006
REVIEW: _____ TBC

PREDICTED SCORE

Say the words *Final Fantasy* to most hardcore RPGers and they'll quake with excitement. A classic game that deserves to be rediscovered.

75%
PLUS



☐ Cecil? What were they thinking of?



☐ We're loving the old skool graphics



❑ Trying to dodge a cannonball from that close range is always going to be rather tricky



❑ There's a raft of mini-games to be played



❑ Board Game mode takes skill, sorry skill

One Piece Pirates Carnival

Ho ho ho and a bottle of rum. This is the kind of party we like.



The *One Piece* TV series and card games are still phenomenally popular in Japan. Bandai has released

many games based on the famous anime, but *Pirates Carnival* is a new type of mini-game collection.

Pirates Carnival puts together 40 mini-games in two main game modes: a board game for one to four players, and a multiplayer-only Battle mode. In Board Game mode, you pick a character from the full *One Piece* cast and then enter a five-by-five grid in each corner of which players have their own base.

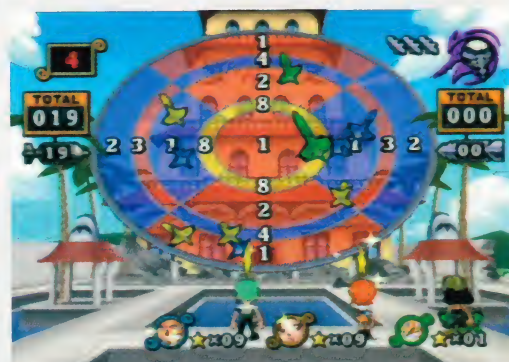
Unlike *Mario Party* and other dice-throwing party games, *Pirates Carnival* doesn't play out over a traditional course. Instead, each of the squares on the grid can be selected in turn and, after a mini-game or other challenge, the winner will occupy that square. The object is to win the greatest bounty and occupy the majority of the board before the final round of play ends.

Although most of the time you play against three opponents in a free-for-all,

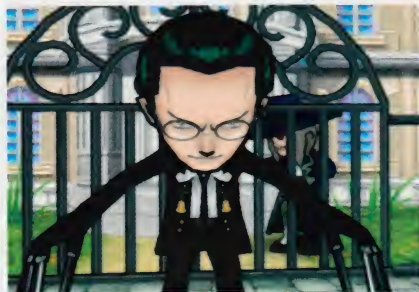
one-on-three challenges also feature while two-versus-two battles happen halfway through each board game to give lagging players an opportunity to level the scores.

There's a neat tactical edge in *Carnival* – you can select a square that has already been claimed by another player, place a bet, and then challenge that player to ownership of the square. If you occupy three squares in a row (horizontally/vertically or diagonally) then you receive a bonus from *Pirates Carnival*'s referee – either some money or a card that you can use to gain advantage in later mini-game rounds.

The mini-games here are all great fun. There are *Diddy Kong Racing*-style boat races in split-screen, tree-climbing races, cannon-firing challenges, treasure hunts in the desert and barrel-smashing games on pirate ships at sea. The variety of mini-games in *Pirates Carnival* is really broad – and many are fun to play over and over again, especially in multiplayer. *One Piece* fans have a treat in store for next year. **Jonti Davis**



❑ 'Stay out of the blue and in the red, there's nothing in this game for two in a bed...'



ESSENTIALS

DEVELOPER: GANBARION

FAMOUS FOR:

Making the incredible *Jump Super Stars*. God, we love that more than *King Kong* the movie. Which made us cry with joy.

MULTIPLAYER: 1-4
PUBLISHER: BANDAI
RELEASE: TBC
REVIEW: TBC

THE PHIAL OF COMPLETION



PREDICTED SCORE

As *One Piece* continues to gain popularity on Toonami, it's getting more likely that games like this will get released. Which is a good thing.

80%
PLUS



❑ Wahey! Let's have a snowball fight and build a rude snowman

❑ Fireballs on the slopes? It's just like real snowboarding. Er, right

SBK: Snowboard Kids

Yes, there's a snowboarding penguin in it. Which is just as well.



You've got to feel a bit sorry for *SBK*. In America it came out at the same time as *Mario Kart DS*. It was a disaster. *SBK* was like roadkill under the tyres of Mario's Formula One car. It was messy. US games journalists poured scorn on the white slopes, melting the fun snow and sending the speeding boarders smashing into the concrete. Now we're going to

tell you about it and we'll be far more objective. IT'S RUBBISH. No, no, no just calm down everybody. We don't mean it.

Mario Kart has got a lot to answer for. From now on nearly every DS game will be compared to it. Which is no bad thing because hopefully it'll drive developers to make bigger and better games. Then again, they may not do as well, they might just keep churning out GBA

quality games with a smattering of dual screen stuff. At least *SBK* is trying to do something impressive. It's all in 3D and there's a fair amount of touch screen input. But will it be pulling you away from *Waluigi Pinball* next year?

Well, the main aspect of racing isn't too bad. Although the tracks are basically a hill, they still manage to throw in a few surprises here and there. There

are sharp turns you'll be wishing you could power-slide round. You can't, instead you have to lean back on the board and skillfully turn round. It's not quite as precise as power-sliding but decent turning sorts out the men from the boys. We're men, just in case you're wondering.

But apart from the odd turn, the tracks don't really offer too much in the way of



❑ This doesn't look right. Landing this way is going to lose you points. And snap your neck, obviously



❑ Puts both screens to good use



London Calling Err... where are all the beggars and traffic jams?

Ha! Those crazy Japanese developers, they've clearly never been to England. Just take a look at these shots of the English track in *SBK*, they're hilarious. If only the trophy at the end of the

track was some kind of jellied eel, then the illusion would be complete for us. You can almost hear the songs of the pearly kings and queens.



❑ We all grew up in castles in London didn't we? Nope, just the Queen, then.



❑ Buses in the snow? Ha, as if. The drivers would have slinked off for a cuppa...



❑ We're pretty sure there isn't a snow jump near Big Ben. Could be wrong, though.

objects. Yes there are caves and the odd jump, but that's about it. Even a level with a load of buses in doesn't actually feature any that move. It just makes you think of DK Pass, with all the traffic, and then you don't fancy playing anymore. We would like to see more moving obstacles in the game when it's released over here. This is unlikely, though, because we were playing finished US code of *SBK*. But perhaps those nice guys at Atlus will think "Hey, let's give those Brits the moving buses they deserve." Or maybe not. They're more likely to leave it as it is. Let's talk about the Items you can use instead.

No fun cartoony racer would be complete without some kind of hilarious weapons and *SBK* has

them in snow bucketfuls. There's everything from simple fireballs to more complicated heavy weights and even bolts of lightning that zap you while racing. They're not very skilful though,



because they all home in on your opponents and, as far as we could tell, there's no way to avoid them. This is a bit of a shame because it means that once you get out in first you're more than likely to get blasted from behind.

But not all is lost with the weapons because some do have interesting effects that require you to use the DS in different ways to recover. Sometimes you'll get sent to sleep by an opponent. To wake up your boarder you need to shout into the mic. Another racer will cloud your screen with

ice and you need to blow into the mic to get it cleared. We liked these different weapons and, to be honest, we're surprised a similar style wasn't adopted in *Mario Kart*.

You can charge up your weapons and make them more powerful by performing well around the track. Just like *SSX*, there are huge jumps where you can pull off some monster tricks. Actually, for a game that's mostly about racing, the number of tricks available is quite impressive. With different button combinations you can do grabs, spins and flips to your heart's content. You've even got to time your landings properly to ensure a smooth race. It's quite fun to perform the tricks, in fact it's often better than the actual racing.

Sometimes, if you've charged up

your special trick meter, you can pull off some whopping moves. These require you to quickly tap the touch screen in different ways to perform alternative tricks. Sometimes



you have to touch certain areas of the screen whereas on others you have to tap numbers in order. Luckily, all the blocks are nice and big so you can press them with your thumb without fiddling with the stylus.

SBK is never going to be a *Mario Kart* beater. For starters, it's not even online. But it's still shaping up to be a fairly fun racer that's a cross between racing games and *SSX*. We'd like to see some of the items changed a bit and the odd track is a bit boring. But, come later this year when it's actually released, it could distract your attention away from *Mario Kart* for at least a couple of hours.

Rob Burman



❑ Trick Time? Surely not with those spikes around. This could get really messy...

ESSENTIALS GO!

DEVELOPER: RACDYM
FAMOUS FOR: Making the other *Snowboard Kids* games and that's about it, really.

MULTIPLAYER: 1-4
PUBLISHER: RISING STAR
RELEASE: MARCH
REVIEW: TBC

THE PHIAL OF COMPLETION



PREDICTED SCORE

A few months ago we absolutely hated it. But after playing it again with a more open mind we quite enjoyed it. Keep your eye on this one.

70%
PLUS



❑ Deploy one of your crystals, the screen changes to this weird negative colour and you too can play as a Hulk Hogan lookalike



❑ Confronted by a lady with those, erm, proportions we certainly wouldn't be looking to poke her with sharp objects...

Bleach Don't try to flush this game down the toilet, 'cos it'll fight its way out.



At first, Sega's 3D beat-'em-up based on the *Bleach* anime licence seems to be a clunky old kind of game.

Characters are controlled with either the 3D Stick or D-Pad, but neither set-up improves the speed of *Bleach's* slow and methodical gameplay. After a while though, it becomes clear this is a rare type of tactical fighter where sidesteps and counters take precedence over quick reactions.

Bleach's most impressive gameplay feature kicks in when you charge one of five crystals in your possession – displayed in the bottom-left corner of the screen – and trigger a slow-motion combo. At this point everything

changes colour to give a weird negative art style. This lasts for around ten seconds, but during that time you can pull off extra-powerful combos that your opponent is unable to counter.

In general play, as swords and other implements are used instead of fists, there is plenty of opportunity for blocking attacks with counter moves. *Bleach* has a strong martial arts flavour in the line of kendo and fencing. Some of the showier special moves really are spectacular displays of swordsmanship. Hit counts for the best combos can reach three figures.

Bleach takes a break from normal beat-'em-ups by offering an elaborate Story mode in the form of an animated

comic book. Each frame is filled with dialogue from the crazy characters *Bleach* fans will be well familiar with, and it's from these conversations and encounters that fighting challenges arise. These challenges increase gradually in difficulty and complexity, culminating in great boss battles.

Standard single-player mode is a procession of bouts against randomly-selected competitors. Match mode is the place for two-player fights, it's also where you'll have the most fun beyond Story mode. There's also a quirky little single-player game of 'beat the toughest character' which pits you against an almost unbeatable boss – returning to this mode is a good way of measuring your progress as a swordsman.

It probably won't appeal to all beat-'em-up fans, but *Bleach's* unique brand of tactical combat makes a refreshing change to other games of this genre. Sega will bring the game to Europe later this year. **Jonti Davis**



❑ Using a short, pointy stick against a bloke with the world's largest sword? No wonder he's gone rather limp-wristed...

ESSENTIALS

DEVELOPER: SEGA

FAMOUS FOR:

In the world of fighting, *Virtua Fighter* is probably Sega's best offering. It's certainly not *Sonic Fighters*.

MULTIPLAYER:

1-2

PUBLISHER:

SEGA

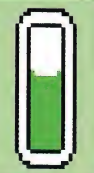
RELEASE:

THIS YEAR

REVIEW:

TBC

THE PHIAL OF COMPLETION



PREDICTED SCORE

It's certainly not a game for everyone, but *Bleach* fans will snaffle this up like a great big pile of warm toast. Mmm, yummy.

75%
PLUS



□ More colourful than a bag of Jelly Beans



□ Graphics are true to the original game, which is good. But gameplay has changed, which is bad

Rainbow Islands Revolution

Retro rainbow game returns – it brings a lump to our throats...



Back in the days before GameCube, when people thought the earth was flat and dragons roamed the land, we had great times playing on a computer called the Amiga. It was fashioned from wood and used magic to play games. We loved it and, in particular, loved a couple of quality Taito games called *New Zealand Story* and *Rainbow Islands*.

We're keeping our fingers crossed for a *New Zealand Story* remake, but a *Rainbow Islands* one is already nearly finished. Better still, we've played it before anyone else. The resulting game is something of a surprise that will shock and delight *Islands* fans in equal measure. Rather like Cheryl from *Girls Aloud* wearing a small bikini, while telling you you're ugly and stupid.

Let's start with the good news.

Unlike the *Bubble Bobble* remake, Taito has stuck with the original art style. That's fantastic. The minute we saw one of the hopping spiders or crows hatching from an old skool egg, we immediately started to well up with fond memories. Tony, the PR who showed us the game, had to slowly dab tears away from our eyes while we sobbed. He was scared, but we didn't care. He hasn't called since, though.

Time to deal with the bad news. The gameplay has been changed. A lot. It now resembles the first bit of *Yoshi Touch & Go* where Mario falls down the screen. Except Bub or Bob is going up the screen in a bubble. You control where he goes by touching the bubble. You then have to draw rainbows at enemies to kill them, while making sure Bub or Bob doesn't float into a waiting spider. It's a strange mechanic

at first, but you get used to it. Eventually. You learn that it's best to hide Bub/Bob under a platform while you quickly kill the on-screen enemies before moving on upwards.

Compared to *Bubble Bobble Revolution* this seems like a much more faithful and interesting adaptation. The top screen is really only used to expand the level but the touch screen controls add something entirely new to the formula. And as long as the military level still has the helicopters with eyes, we could be sold on this game. **Rob Burman**



ESSENTIALS

DEVELOPER: TAITO

FAMOUS FOR:

Well it messed up the *Bubble Bobble* remake but this is looking a damn sight better and much more fun.

THE PHIAL OF COMPLETION



MULTIPLAYER: 1-2

PUBLISHER: RISING STAR

RELEASE: NEXT MONTH

REVIEW: TBC

PREDICTED SCORE

Once you get passed the funny controls it's actually an interesting and fun game. It reminds us of *Yoshi Touch & Go*, which is a good thing.

75%
PLUS

OUT NOW

IS IT A BIRD, IS IT A PLANE?
NO, IT'S OUR 200TH ISSUE!



EMPIRE 200

ON SALE NOW

THE GAMES OF 2005

We cajoled, bribed and rowed to bring you the top 20 games of 2005. Rob just about let the *Nintendogs* get away with their lives.





20

POKÉMON EMERALD



We still can't pronounce the thing's name that's on the box. If Charmander had been on there it would have scored exactly 11% more than *Ruby* and *Sapphire*. But it didn't. The rehash of said games got shrunk to one cart and had the Alton Towers for Pokemaniacs, Battle Frontier, dropped in for good measure. It wasn't enough though before Wingulls up and down the country cried 'REHASH'.

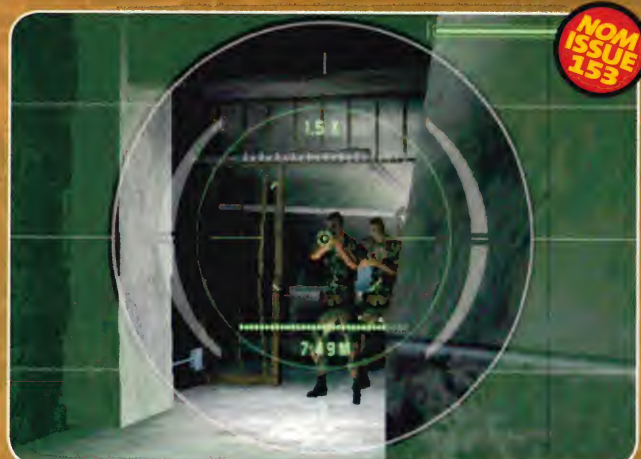


19

SPLINTER CELL CHAOS THEORY



Somehow *Metal Gear* snuck into last year's top 20. This year it wouldn't even tickle a top 30. Thankfully *Chaos Theory* filled the hole in your stealth games appetite with a more realistic game than anything Sam had seen, and Snake could only hope to achieve. With more freedom to roam than a drunk in an open field, we had to include Mr. Fisher. Failure wasn't an option.



18

TONY HAWK'S AMERICAN SK8LAND



Surprise of the Year #1: *Tony Hawk* wasn't rubbish. Birdman literally took off, blasting us into the cosmos known as Games Heaven. The old art style bailed, in came a cel-shaded look that we fell in love with. This was 3D on DS, with no slowdown, and beat *Mario Kart* off the grid to be the first DS online game. And just for good measure, those spine transfers sounded as painful as they did in No.4.



17

BATTALION WARS



'We will fight them on the beaches,' growled the team, chomping on fat cigars and giving V-signs. Not since the days of *Command & Conquer* had we seen an action strategy worthy of our attention, but it hit us with the full force of ten Megatanks unloading their full arsenal at once. Replaced Americans for the Western Front and Russians for the Tundrans. *Battalion* became the 3D *Advance* and won us over.



BIGGEST DISAPPOINTMENT: PETER JACKSON'S KING KONG

We built it up as The Game Of The Year. We sold our grannies and with the proceeds bet cold, hard cash on the fact that the bruising primate from some faraway island was

going to pick us up, pat us on the head and thank us, in a couple of grunts, for being his friend. Sadly, Mr Kong had a hangover the day we saw him. He showed us the love for

SIX HOURS and then retired to his jungle hut to recover. SIX HOURS, six MEASLY hours. Rob's had counselling ever since. Not even KFC helps.

16

SPARTAN: TOTAL WARRIOR



The last time we played in the sand and wore sandals we were five and building the best castles on the south coast. Now we're, well whatever, and playing in sand smashing people with hammers, swords, axes and God knows what else. God does know, well the 'of War' one does. Aries grants you some mint freeze-armies-from-the-heavens and the world of Hack 'n' Slash rejoiced just as they did in the days of *Gauntlet*.



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15

MARIO POWER TENNIS



The Power Moves didn't just annoy us on GameCube, they wrecked what could have been the Sports Game Of The Year. If the ball's gone out, no love hearts should rescue it. That's called CHEATING. GBA *Power Tennis* saved Mario's blushes with an in-depth sports RPG that played like *Henman* with venom running through his veins. The Power Moves were there but not quite as in your face as they once were.



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14

DONKEY KONG JUNGLE BEAT



Bongos Anonymous meeting, last Saturday: "I CAN'T STAND THOSE SUPERGRASS COVER SINGERS ANYMORE! I WANT TO BE HAMMERED, NOT PATTED!" If you love your bongos then ignore *Donkey Konga* and get *Jungle Beat* – a 2D platformer that's as individual as peanut butter flavoured ice cream and as old skool as *Grange Hill*. A joy to hammer, and the goat bits are ace.



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13

FIRE EMBLEM: PATH OF RADIANCE



Knight moves to E3. Balls! Sorry, wrong game, but partly true. You move between squares in a sort of offspring of a *Lord of the Rings* that's copped off with *Advance Wars*. Yet it's totally awesome with a bewitching storyline and a masterstroke for strategy fans everywhere. Answer this... do you hang out in *Games Workshop* at weekends? Did we just hear you say yes? Then this is the stuff for you.



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BEST IMPORT GAMES...

1. JUMP SUPERSTARS

It's the Eastern *Melee*, starring Goku and Naruto. A comic book cracker.

2. OUENDAN

Dancing male cheerleaders and the music to give *Band Brothers* a drumming.

3. SLIME MORI MORI 2

Rightly HUGE in Japan. Tank battles are better than *Advance Wars*.

4. NARUTO 3

A three-button fighter and no One Hundred Hand Slap in sight.

5. GOEMON

Giant robot battles hark back to N64's *Mystical Ninja*. Mechazilla is king!



12

ASTRO BOY: OMEGA FACTOR



Gunstar just missed out, but only 'cos its launch was delayed to '06. Actually what happened was the boy with the rocket boots and machine gun ass put pay to it with a 2D sprite fest sent to earth by Treasure's factory of magic in the sky. We have no idea who Astro Boy is, but he relieved our crap games indigestion with his gameplay Rennies and knocked the spots off most other things filed under '3D'.



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11

NINTENDOGS



They shifted loads of DSs around the world and shifted their crap onto your handheld screen, literally. Thankfully the council won't make you fork out a £50 fine. Give your dog a rude name, play with it and unlock that Mario kart. It's cuter than Charlotte Church in her underwear. Oh, and if you can find a pink *Nintendogs DS* pack, please let Dan know. He's driving us NUTS.



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10

POP: THE TWO THRONES



Here we go, the first game of the top ten, and what a belter it is. The crazy acrobatics of the original was back, charging up walls and back-flipping to gaming gold. The dark side came complete with the chain-wielding menace and only the ill-advised inclusion of the chariot races stops this balancing on a ledge higher up the chart, getting vertigo as it stares down at the rest of the 20.



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09

SUPER MARIO 64 DS



The shooting star, the Jamaican kettledrum beats and the most famous phrase in Gamesdom. It was a case of It's-A-Me Mario as Nintendo's superstar kicked off life on DS with the greatest game of all time now on two screens. With added stars, life-giving mini-games and tunes to die for, it was the return of the king with Wario as your Gimli. Only the re-make factor stopped it going higher.



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WORST GAME (by a mile): CRAZY FROG RACER

A-ding-ding-ding-ding-diddling-ding-my-willy's-blocked-out-da-diiing-ding-ding-dorhm-bom-bom-bedom-bem-bom-bedom-bom-bum-ba-ba-bom-bom. Games

like this shouldn't be born. They should be left cosy and warm in the womb known as a game developer's brain. It only just got 5% this issue, for the fact that it works

when you switch it on and it has something resembling 'graphics'. The Most Annoying Thing ever, becomes the worst a game's ever scored in NOM.

08

FIRE EMBLEM: THE SACRED STONES



Those paladins and Joshuas can't stay away for long and neither can they make a crap game. The GBA sequel served up a plate of mystical meat (eaten without cutlery) and washed it down with a goblet of strategy grog. Even the court jester delighted us with his musical japery and the king was happy, before soiling his pants at the sight of the game's enormous bosses.



07

KIRBY POWER PAINTBRUSH



It was either going to be this or *Yoshi Touch & Go*. The dino tried to lick him up but his tongue wouldn't reach, so Kirby just SUCKED UP AIR with Yoshi inside it. The 2D platformer from c.1992 was given a completely new coat of paint with the stylus control, drawing twisting tracks and snaring nasties with your rings of death. It was a pink powerhouse of fun and almost none of you bought it. Fools!

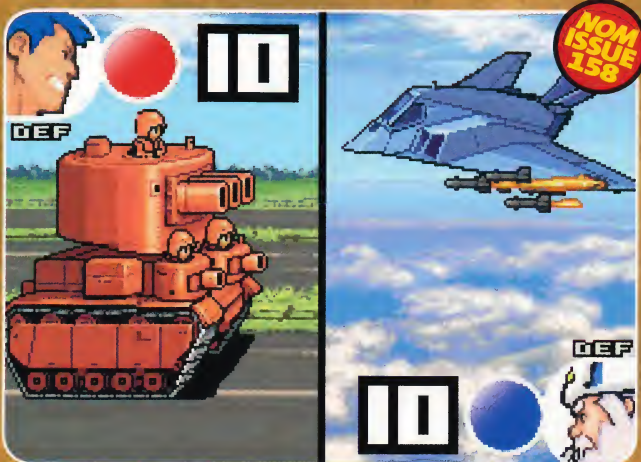


06

ADVANCE WARS: DUAL STRIKE



We'd like a date with Rachel and her red coat. We'd love her to rip off her cap and shake out those golden locks. Oh god, we love the smell of Herbal Essence in the morning. But anyway, *AWDS* unleashed hell across two screens, sky and earth, with a force of US Army proportions. More campaigns to make even Hitler wince, this took the original, marched it ten miles and made it do 50 star jumps. A true sequel.



05

SONIC RUSH



Heroes? Adventure 2? PAH! They're nothing when you line them up against 2D Sonic. He hammers past their feeble polygons and finishes a loop before they've even hit the runway. *Rush* blasted us back ten years to gaze at the seeds that made Sonic so cool, then rocketed us into the future with his best ever game. The subtle addition of the boost bar made it a non-stop speed treat.



THE NEAR MISSES...

1. GUNSTAR FUTURE HEROES

The game's release slipped to 2006 just as we were making the chart.

2. TS FUTURE PERFECT

3D shoot-'em-ups don't match the 2D delights found in *Astro Boy*.

3. YOSHI'S TOUCH & GO

Mr. Pink stole Mr. Green's chart position. Yoshi cut his ears off.

4. POLARIUM

Before *Meteos* there was only one puzzler. After *Meteos* there was *Meteos*.

5. WARIO WARE TOUCHED

Blow and shout all you want Johnny, *Twisted* is the only one in our book.



04

METEOS



We eat blocks for breakfast. Not Shredded Wheat, but puzzle blocks. For years it was T*****, now it's the turn of *Meteos* to launch your games love into orbit. The most innovative 'puzzle' game in years, your brain overrides the Think button as you line up blocks and fire the boosters. All done with the stylus for precision control, the DS was made for this. It's too awesome to explain here, you just need it in your life.



03

CASTLEVANIA DAWN OF SORROW



No other game has a yeti who eats curry. We've had giant, opera-singing turds before, but not a Korma-loving hair beast. *Castlevania* is the action adventure game of the year with a bestiary to make David Attenborough proud, and a perfectly pitched system of feeling your power grow as you destroy blood-curdling monsters to earn Souls. And you need them all, anything less and you're rubbish.

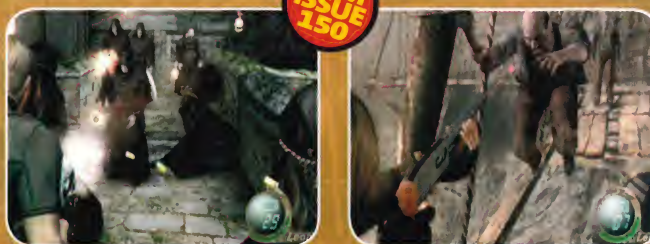


02

RESIDENT EVIL 4



Did you survive the horror? We just about managed it after six changes of pants. The most terrifying thing on GameCube puts you in the centre of the most realistic horror game EVER. Our hearts pounded as El Gigante grabbed us and as the chainsaw dude fired up for the kill. As for those pitchforks, well they nearly had our eye out. *Resi 4* is essential.



THE GAMES OF 2006...

1. LOZ: TWILIGHT PRINCESS
You've waited long enough. GameCube's swansong is going to be astonishing.

2. ANIMAL CROSSING DS
Ride in Kapp'n's taxi to a world of fishing and fossils. All online, too.

3. PRIME HUNTERS
The suit is being dusted down. Our Morph Balls are tingling at the idea.

4. MARIO & LUIGI 2
Doctor and Rose are true partners, but you'll have to put up with the Bros.

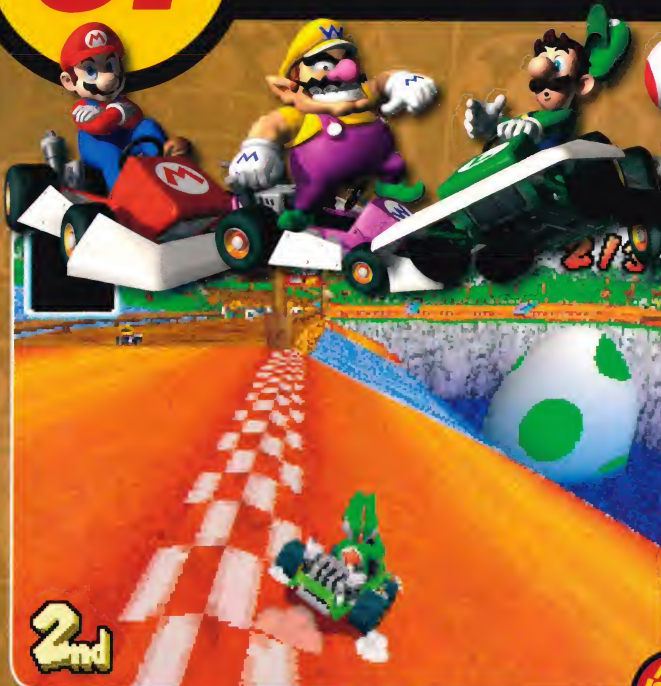
5. CHIBI ROBO
Clean the house, put the rubbish out. Should be called *Mum: The Game*.

01

MARIO KART DS



We hate the Blue Shells, but nothing else can knock it. The tracks are works of genius and playing online is so perfect we thank Almighty for the all-nighters the developing elves put in at Nintendo HQ. Oh and did we say it's better than the Super NES original? No? Well we've said it, so there. Just don't quit when online. That's for losers and God will send you to Hell where you'll eat fire, watch *EastEnders* and play *Sprung*. Forever.



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3+

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MICROPHONE INCLUDED!

EIGHT FRIENDS, FOUR TEAMS, ONE PARTY!



ENJOY THE ULTIMATE
MULTIPLAYER MINIGAME MADNESS

If your idea of fun is running, jumping, shouting and laughing like mad, this is just the party for you. And don't forget to tell your friends because now up to 8 players can battle it out in 88 awesome all-new minigames. Join Mario for the party of a lifetime!

MARIO PARTY 7



NINTENDO
GAMECUBE

MARIO PARTY 7. OUT 10th FEBRUARY
Only for Nintendo GameCube



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Reviews



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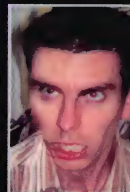


DS

» Viewtiful Joe Double Trouble » P.84

SAY GOODBYE

You won't see their ugly mugs ever again.



Tim Street

After 327 reviews, 1.43m exclamation marks and nine cover 'Blowouts!', the boss is FINALLY bowing out. See those eyes? They've been crying for weeks.



Dean Scott

We had to wave off Dean early this month. His diet of meat and water had caused his eyes to collapse and he couldn't see his keyboard. Adios amigo.



Mike Jackson

Mike is buried next to Dean in the NOM family plot, with a DS so he can enjoy Mario Kart. No doubt some beyond the grave online gaming is on the cards.



Rob Burman

This is what Rob looked like the moment he died. Seconds before he was telling us how much he loved Chibi Robo. He's coming back as a Dyson.

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

JONATHAN GORDON

He gave us leaving presents. We'll miss him.

CHRIS KOHLER

He met up with Frank and toasted NOM.

FRANK CIFALDI

He met up with Chris and toasted NOM.

JONTI DAVIES

He did One Piece. That's all he's done all year.

KINGSLEY SINGLETON

His copy was late. No change there, then.

SCORES AND AWARDS

90+

85 - 89

80 - 84

75 - 79

70 - 74

65 - 69

60 - 64

55 - 59

50 - 54

45 - 49

40 - 44

35 - 39

30 - 34

25 - 29

A Nintendo Classic
Exceptional in its class

Great fun, but not ground-breaking

Some nice ideas, but lacks Nintendo magic

Few classic moments - for die-hards only

Been there, seen it, played it. Yawn!

No ideas, no gameplay, no way

Poison to your console

Not worth stealing



POISON
A real minger that might give you a nasty disease just by touching it. Steer clear at all costs.



SUPERSTAR
Only dished out to truly great games. There can be more than one in a month, but they have to be special.



Mario Party 7

Seventh verse, same as the last one.

GAME INFO

Out: 27 JANUARY

Price: £39.99

Players: 1-8

Publisher: NINTENDO



➤ Mario's party is starting to get a little old. At first, things were great. Luigi was bartending and poured the drinks really strong. Everybody was laughing at Toadsworth,

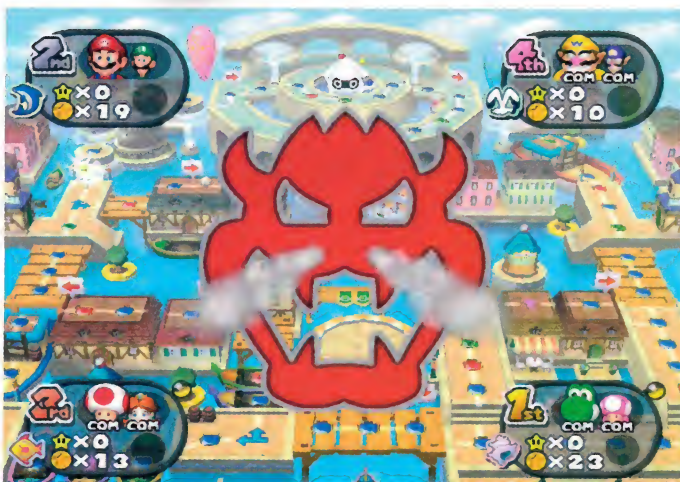
who puked in the potted plant. Even the normally shy Koopa Troopas came out of their shells (groan). Toadette was going around without any pants. But then it got boring. Half the party passed out on the back porch. Mario was being a jerk every time somebody dropped their drink because it had just dawned on him that he had to clean all this up in the morning. And Yoshi had gotten all existential, trying to convince everyone within earshot that there was no Miyamoto.

Don't get me wrong, I've had a long and very happy relationship with *Mario Party*. The first game came out on N64 just as I was starting university, and every year since then has been a fun-filled blast. We killed our hands spinning the 3D Sticks. We cheered when someone hit a Bowser Revolution and donated all their coins to the rest of us. We screamed the names of different tropical fruits into the microphone. We drank lots of alcoholic beverages. So trust me when I say that the



■ Holland seems to have changed quite a lot since we were last there

"The same solid party game you remember, which is good and bad"



■ You'll need to find (or possibly buy) four friends for core gameplay

party needs some revitalisation. *Mario Party 7* is still the same solid party game you remember, which is sort of good and sort of bad. And in the end, the token new features and barrel of new mini-games isn't enough to make me forget that this is the fourth GameCube installment in as many years. The core gameplay — four players (some can be controlled by the computer if you don't have enough friends or gullible family members) run around a game board, landing on

spaces, collecting coins, battling in mini-games, and buying Stars — is pretty much the same.

There are 86 new mini-games this time round, ten of which use the GameCube Mic controller included once again in the package. Sadly, the sort-of-fun Mic mode from *Mario Party 6* is gone, meaning you'll only use it for those ten games (plus a smattering of single-player Mic games that you'll encounter on special spaces in the board game). Once you get bored of the

novelty of yelling 'BANANA', you can turn all the Mic games off.

On the plus side, though, the Mic games are a little more equal now. When you played a Mic mini-game in *MP6*, only one player used the Mic, while the other three used the controller. In this year's installment, players take turns using the Mic in games like *Mathemortician*, where you call out numbers on a grid to fire pellets at the Boo Buddies that are parading across it. Each player gets a turn so you don't have any excuse for yelling 'This crap is unfair!' and stomping out of the room, you cry-baby.

But even though the Mic is included in the box, it's not the big draw. *Mario Party 7*'s claim to fame are the eight-player mini-games. Yes, we know that there are only four holes on the front of the GameCube. No, you don't have to link two Cubes and two televisions together. None of that rubbish. To play these games, each player holds one half of a controller. They're excessively

simple — you're either using the 3D Stick or the shoulder button. But they're all set up to either confuse ('Real Smoothie,' where each player has to grab a different kind of fruit) or enrage ('Synchrow-nicity' where the two players have to row a boat in tandem — doesn't THAT sound fun).

The eight-player mode is also excessively simple. There's no über-game board, you can either choose to play the 12 different mini-games in a Free Play mode or what the game calls Ice Battle, which is just a glorified three-

points-wins tournament. Whether or not the eight-player mode really works for you will depend on the kind of friends you have. If your friends are polite, well-mannered young people who are patient and tolerant of

other people's space, then it will be no fun. If your friends are assholes it will be awesome. Everyone will be yanking the controller away and taking advantage of their close proximity to punch each other in the mouth. A game time will !!!





be had by all, but just make sure to use the beat-up third party crap controllers that Grandma got you for Christmas, because they're going to get broken very quickly.

Just like in *Mario Party 6*, the boards are varied up a bit. It's not just about getting the most Stars. In Pyramid Park you can use Chain Chomps to steal Stars from your friends. On Pagoda Peak you can only get Stars by reaching the top of the mountain. In Windmillville, there are seven windmills that have Stars in them, and you have to purchase the windmill by putting coins into it.

As you might imagine, Bowser isn't happy that the Mario gang are having all this fun. Fun for Bowser isn't taking a cruise and playing four-player microphone shuffleboard. I don't know what Bowser does for fun, but it probably requires a spiked whip, fire, a flying machine and an endless supply of ammunition. In any case he's sent his three little Koopa kids to random spaces on every game board, and if you land on one... actually it's not as terrible as you'd think. They'll

■ "You're not singing any more, you're not singing any more"



■ Boat race is hull on earth. Geddit



■ Last one to the edge gets the teas in

make you do things like swap your coins or switch places with a randomly selected player, which actually helps as often as it hurts.

So where's the pain? Bowser doesn't rely on just having his



■ Up to eight players can play at once, with only four controllers. How does that work? Stop being lazy and read the review



■ A sliding tackle against something that big is never going to work

own special spaces anymore. He's sick of leaving it to chance. Instead, a Bowser Gauge will build up as you play the game, and when it hits maximum the man himself will descend onto the board to make you suffer.

Other than that, things are pretty much the same as you remember. You can buy Orbs with items inside and find them for free around the board. Use Mushrooms to get higher dice block rolls, use enemy items to set traps on the board. But now every character has their own special Orbs that only they can use. What's that?

Differences between the characters? Now that's a *Mario Party* first. Toad and Toadette can get valuable Triple Mushroom

Orbs. Mario and Luigi get fireballs. Open the manual and study.

Now, picking a character is based on more than who has the worst-sounding taunt (hint: it's still Toad).

The Solo mode has received the biggest overhaul, though. You'll compete

in a short game with a different goal (reach the top of said mountain with 100 coins or more, for example) against one computer or human player. This is a good option if you want to Party with only two partners – you won't have to spend half your time watching the computer play, and you don't have to suffer the



Dry Bones

What the hell is he? We get to the bottom of the mystery

■ Kids, you're old enough now to know the truth. It isn't like you heard before. Koopa Troopa didn't go on a vacation to Bermuda. He got run over by a truck and now he lives with Jesus and the angels in heaven.

Oh, and Bowser dug up his corpse and re-animated it to patrol his fortress. The special one with the warp whistle's in it. He did a crap job guarding it though, and Bowser tried to have him re-killed but, as we all know, you can't kill a zombie. We're going to take you to the pet store and get you a nice puppy this time. Promise.



■ Make sure you don't step off the pepperoni pizza...



■ "When you said 'Let's get hammered' this isn't what I had in mind"



■ Giant killer Smarties coming to GameCube near you soon

"Now every character has their own special Orbs. That's a *Mario Party* first."

ignominy of having the computer actually somehow win your fifty-turn game.

In the end, *Mario Party 7* retains so much of the original games' design, graphics, and overall presentation that it's hard to rate it any higher. The writing is funny. The mini-games are decent. The amount of boards and challenges will satisfy you if you've bought the last

three. But this series needs to be slapped on the head, hard. It looks the same as it did in 2002! It plays nearly identically! Am I going to get my friends together, play it, and have a riotous time making up dirty names for all the mini-games? Yes. But I want something totally fresh and new next time round. *Mario Party* for the Revolution had better be special...



■ Do you sometimes feel like you're going round and round in circles?



Nintendo®

OFFICIAL MAG SAYS...



GRAPHICS

7

The same Mario family models as always. This series could use some cel-shading, or something to give it a boost.



SOUND

8

We found ourselves humming the tunes after we'd turned the game off, which is a good sign, we guess.



GAMEPLAY

6

Still the exact same sort-of-clunky-but-acceptable-I-guess mini-game controls. Not bad but not brilliant either.



VALUE

7

Yeah, it's basically the same game you just dropped forty quid on, but if you have friends it will last.

MARIOS AND WARIOS



IT'S NOT BROKEN OR ANYTHING. IF YOU LIKE *MARIO PARTY* YOU'LL LIKE THIS.



EIGHT-PLAYER MINI-GAMES MEAN NOBODY HAS TO WAIT AROUND.



TWO-PLAYER OPTION IN THE SOLO MODE IS A SOLID CONCEPT.



IT'S THE SAME DAMN GAME AS LAST YEAR AND THE YEAR BEFORE.



THERE'S NO SPECIAL MIC MODE THIS TIME AND ONLY TEN MIC GAMES.



STILL A BORE-FEST IF YOU'RE STUCK PLAYING ALONE.

THE VERDICT

[Chris Kohler] My Friends and I used to play *Mario Party* a lot, but the thrill is wearing off. Here's hoping *Mario Party Revolution* gives this series a much-needed boost.

Nintendo®

JUDGEMENT

71%



Burnout bar is made up of flames. Can you see what they've done there...?



Burnout Legends

Sweet racing game transfers from home console to handheld and it's... been ruined

For those of you too young to remember, *Burnout* was a sweet racing game on something called GameCube. *Burnout 2: Point of Impact*, also on this GameCube thing, was equally brilliant. Both had lightning-fast, pin-sharp graphics and a thumping soundtrack to match. Then it all went quiet. We're not sure if

there were any *Burnout* games after that because we've had our fingers in our ears humming the theme from *Ocarina of Time* ever since. It's possible though, other consoles DO exist.

Well, now *Burnout* has come back to Nintendo. Yes, they always come crawling back. *Legends* apparently combines the best bits of *Burnouts* one

to three (yes, there WAS a third one! It was called *Burnout: Make Other People Crash*, on Xbox and PS2, AND a fourth, called *Burnout: You Made Me Crash, Now I Want To Get You Back*, or something). The content's the same. When we say the same, take that with a big shovel of gritty bad-weather road-salt. The graphics aren't the same. They're worse. The sound isn't the same either. That's worse, too.

But then if you're bright, you're not expecting Xbox graphics and sound on DS. You want double-screen innovation.

You can guess touch input is going to be limited when you're prodding at the Start screen and nothing happens. We thought it was broken, but you actually have to press the Start button. What is this, 1996? Maybe the bottom screen is where the innovation kicks in. Nope. You've got two screens, so let's waste one of them with a load of crap you don't need. Maps are handy when there are multiple routes, but *Legends'* tracks are just big, twisty ovals. It's a waste of a

GAME INFO

Out: **NOW!**
Price: **£29.99**
Players: **1-2**
Publisher: **EA**



screen. It's like buying a house with two bedrooms and then filling one of them with useless junk because it's there: "Darling where's the map of the house that shows where we are in relation to each other?" "It's in the spare bedroom dear," "And the diagram of the house that shows how damaged it is when it only blows up if we crash it into the other houses a MILLION times?" "Same place."

You can press Pause and use the stylus to raise and lower the music volume, though. Did Nintendo's R&D team that invented DS see that coming when they first sketched out wild and dreamlike plans for their two-screen dream machine? Who knows, we took out the stylus at the start, then relegated it to a toothpick, chewing and snarling like a geeky Clint Eastwood.

Pure-racing wise the *Burnout* series has always been on shaky



Get your revenge on Sunday-driving grandads in Takedown mode

Better than maps

Racing games don't need maps, they need one of these...

What's the point of having a map in a racing game? The other cars are either AHEAD of you or BEHIND you. And you're all going in the SAME direction as fast as possible anyway. Don't look at the map. Just keep driving. Think we're being harsh? Okay, here are two things EA could have done with the lower screen. They may not make real, actual concrete sense, but they'd have been cool.



WHAT: Radio tuner like *Outrun* in days of yore.

HOW: Slide your thumb across the touch screen to select the station you want.

WHY: Teaches kids it's easy to crash your car while trying to find Xfm.



WHAT: Champagne... because winners use taxable drugs.

HOW: Shake bottle with the stylus and spray bubbles over attractive ladies.

WHY: If you've ever seen a wet T-shirt competition, you'll know why.



There aren't many cars to hit, so you may have to resort to smacking into palm trees

ground, but with *Legends*' over-reliance on point-scoring and takedowns (where you force other drivers to crash in irritating slow motion) it makes even less sense. We're sure that you need to cross the line first at some stage, though.

As usual, driving near other cars, into oncoming traffic, or drifting around corners fills your Burnout bar, gaining speed boosts and points. Plus you can after-touch your car as it crashes (again in slooow motion) and smack it into fellow racers for more points. You may also get points for growing facial hair in a small strip on your chin and saying "Arrrrsome!" But not if you're a lady. Trouble is there's not enough traffic to make it challenging. This is probably so the game moves faster – and it does move fast – but it also takes the skill level down. Other cars are too easily forced into crashes, too. Same goes for

the Crash mode – there are so few cars it's bordering on pathetic.

The tracks are good, but better once you've been round them a few times – it's tough to see where you're going when the road levels out because graphically, *Legends* is okay, but lacks finesse (witness the flutter-free flags). Again, this helps the speed.

Movement around the track is fast and smooth, but it's best played in first-person mode, so you don't have to look at your own blocky car. Don't do a 180° turn though, or you'll see the terrifying red wall of processing that follows you. It's scary, believe us. The noise you get when doing a burnout is kind of frightening, too. It's like a thousand kids eating crisps in the backseat. The other cars sound like buckets when you hit them. Clank, crunch, clank. Quick! Where's the stylus so we can turn the sound down?

Nintendo®

OFFICIAL MAG SAYS...



GRAPHICS

7

Chunky, but fast moving. Collision detection's a bit off, unless it's that cheap cider we've been drinking.



SOUND

5

A drop from the home console versions, but even EA wouldn't have the audacity to squeeze Franz Ferdinand into a DS, would it?



INNOVATION

5

It adds some new twists to the racing format, but it's still basically a two-year-old game with no DS-specific features.



VALUE

8

Burnout games always pack the extras in. Loads of cars, events and events to unlock, plus a ton of multiplayer malarkey.

MARIOS AND WARIOS



SOME GOOD COURSES AND PLENTY OF VARIETY IN THE RACING MODES.



IT'S FAST, EXCEPT WHEN THE ANNOYING SLOW-MO CRASHES KICKS IN.

CRASH ANIMATIONS SPOIL THE FLOW OF THE RACING.



THERE'S NOT ENOUGH TRAFFIC TO MAKE IT A CHALLENGE.



THE CAR-SELECT SCREEN SHOULD HAVE STATS LIKE SPEED OR HANDLING.



DID ANYONE TELL EA ABOUT THE TOUCH SCREEN?

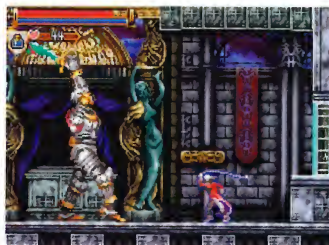
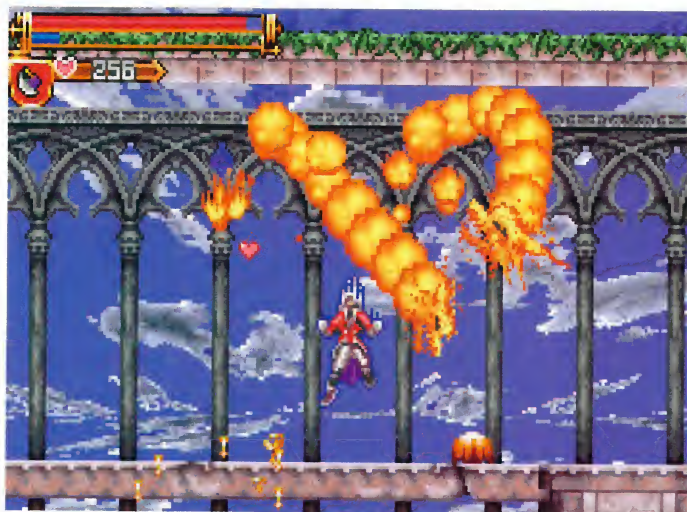


THE VERDICT

Kingsley DS games are supposed to be different. This isn't. It's the same as the home console versions but with bigger pixels and fewer cars. Oh God this is depressing.

Nintendo®
OFFICIAL MAGAZINE
JUDGEMENT

59%



GAME INFO

Out: FEBRUARY
Price: £29.99
Players: 1
Publisher: KONAMI

Castlevania

Two quality games in one small cartridge – can life get any better?

Castlevania, better known as *Metroid* with whips and skeletons. We love it. If we could quit our jobs and become vampire hunters we would close *NOM* in an instant and move to Transylvania. When there's no *NOM* next month you know what's happened. So when we heard Konami was re-releasing two great, and now hard to find, *Castlevania* games on one GBA cart, we dropped our stakes in excitement. Now we want to pass our excitement onto you, the lucky reader.

ARIA OF SORROW

This is one of the greatest adventure games ever. Not a single second is wasted to ensure that this links charm from the puncture wounds on its neck. It

is pure brilliance. When it was released, people who had never played *Castlevania* games were drawn to it like a vampire bat to blood. It was also the base for one of the best DS titles this year, although *Dawn of Sorrow* didn't really have to improve on the winning formula.

Aria is unusual for a *Castlevania* game, because you don't play as one of the Belmont clan. Instead, you play as Soma Cruz, a high school student who has been given the unenviable task of stopping Dracula. Bloody hell, it's always Dracula causing trouble, isn't it? We're pretty sure Peter Cushing never had this much trouble killing Dracula in the old Hammer Horror films. A bit of sunlight always seemed to get rid of those pesky vamps.

So, Soma travels into Dracula's castle ready to start busting some zombie heads – but there's a catch. Cruz can absorb the souls of monsters. This is when the world of *Castlevania* turns upside down and becomes a beautiful thing. The souls you absorb give you different power-ups, just like *Dawn of Sorrow*. But this is where the idea was born, so it deserves muchos respectos. The souls available have a variety of different effects. The first one you get lets you throw spears, but that's rubbish compared to some of the others you'll find.

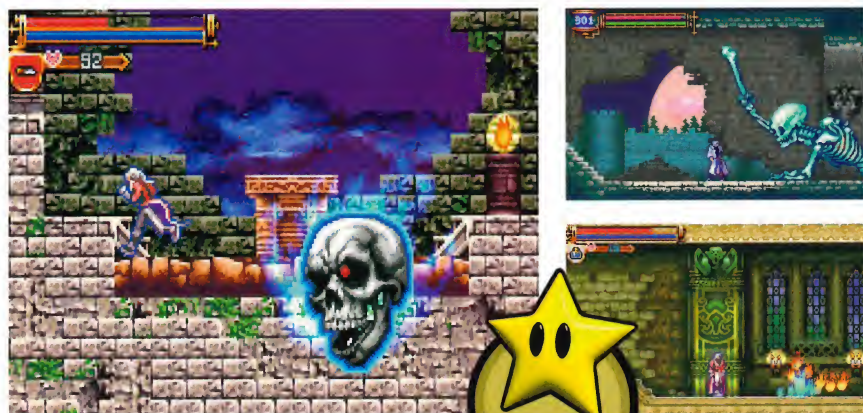
It's also worth experimenting with the souls. Don't just get one good one and think that's all you need for the rest of the game. Each time you collect a new one, and there are certainly a lot, it's

best to just try it out to see what kind of damage it does. Also remember you can upgrade your souls by collecting more of them. Rob played through *Aria of Sorrow* about a year ago without even realising you could upgrade the souls. What a berk.

Aria of Sorrow would be worth 30 of your finest notes even if it was re-released on its own, but the fact it comes with *Harmony of Dissonance* is just a spectacular bonus. If you've played the DS version you may be disappointed by the slightly inferior graphics, but it's still a belter of a game.

HARMONY OF DISSONANCE

Now, this is a more traditional *Castlevania* game. You're one of the Belmont offspring and you're armed with a whip. WUPPAH.



Double Pack

Have a whip in your mush Mr. Skeleton! Ahem. Dracula's back as well and, once again, it's time to storm his castle which is full of bloody monsters. Crikey, the company that Dracula keeps! We thought he hung about with busty women and perhaps the odd wolf. Not zombies and Flea Men.

One of the major differences between this and *Aria of Sorrow* is that you don't collect souls. Instead, you collect elemental magical books, which you can combine with different secondary weapons to create new attacks. The only problem is that you can only carry one secondary weapon at once, which is a shame. But if you combine it with different elemental magical books, you should find you have enough attacks at your disposal. There's a particularly cool move where Juste, the character you play as, lashes out with his fists in a blur of fury. It's fantastic.

Another good move Juste has at his disposal is the ability to dash either left or right by pressing **L** or **R**. This is

a great technique to avoid attacks from enemies and can be a real lifesaver when you're taking on the classic *Castlevania* bosses – of which there are many.

Harmony of Dissonance carries on the gothic *Metroid* similarities by letting Juste upgrade his abilities as he navigates his way through the spooky castle. Just like *Metroid* there will be some areas that you just can't access until you find a particular upgrade, like the double jump. The map will tease you with these unexplorable areas. They'll laugh at you until you fight a boss and get the upgrade you need. Then it's all over for the map, it won't be laughing when you use a sliding kick to get through a small gap.

Like *Aria of Sorrow*, *Dissonance* looks great and playing both games on either a DS or Micro is like seeing a new game. They were always a bit murky on the old GBAs, but now they look fantastic. A beautiful dream full of bats, bone-throwing skeletons and ghostly coats of armour. Boy, we can't wait to go to sleep and start dreaming about it.

Nintendo®

OFFICIAL MAG SAYS...



GRAPHICS

9

Playing them again on brighter screens is wonderful. Not as good as *Dawn of Sorrow*, but they're some of the best on GBA.



SOUND

8

Aria of Sorrow has fantastic music that'll make the hairs on your neck stand up. *Harmony*, in comparison, sounds dodgy.



GAMEPLAY

9

A game all about smacking things in the face to get more powerful so you can smack bigger things in the face. We love it!



VALUE

10

One *Castlevania* game would be enough for us, the fact you're getting two for the price of one is just too much to handle.

MARIOS AND WARIOS



TWO CASTLEVANIA GAMES FOR THE PRICE OF ONE.



FANTASTIC GRAPHICS THAT STILL LOOK GREAT TODAY.



BRILLIANT GAMEPLAY THAT'S HARD TO BEAT ANYWHERE.



THE CHANCE TO GET YOUR HANDS ON TWO QUITE RARE GAMES.



IT'S ALWAYS GOING TO BE FUN TO HIT BATS WITH A WHIP.

COULD THEY HAVE CRAMMED CIRCLE OF THE MOON IN AS WELL?



THE VERDICT

In theory these are two 90 games so this pack should get at least 100. That would be silly. But this is a GBA cart you need to own. **Rob Burman**

Nintendo®

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE
JUDGEMENT

92%



Looks like the Persian equivalent of a Millwall home game...



BOPOP is a game of squares, unlike chess which is a game for squares

Battles of Prince of Persia

Advance Wars meets *Fire Emblem* in Persia with a smattering of *Yu-Gi-Oh!*

GAME INFO

Out: **NOW!**
Price: **£29.99**
Players: **1-2**
Publisher: **UBISOFT**



Now pay attention class. What's fun about *Prince of Persia*? Well done Perkins. Yes, it's all that running up walls and jumping about like a hyperactive acrobat. Now, what wasn't fun about *Prince of Persia*? Give yourself a star Perkins, of course it was the

slightly dull fighting. So basing an entire game on tactical Persian fighting seemed like complete folly. We scoffed heartily at *BOPOP* but the laughter soon died when we started playing – it's actually rather good.

If we said it was like a more tactical *Fire Emblem*, you'd probably spit out your food, if you were eating. Or fall over, if you weren't already sitting down. Obviously if you were standing up AND eating food, it would be messy.

But it kind of is like a more tactical *Fire Emblem*. It certainly hasn't got the charm of *Fire Emblem*, all your troops are pretty faceless apart from your charismatic general. You don't get attached to them when they die, unlike the time we saw Nino take an axe to the head and wept for a week. But the *Fire Emblem* blood runs through *BOPOP* like a digital red river.

It's clear right from the moment you start playing this turn-based strategy game. Before each battle there are

exchanges between the two foes and a certain amount of lip flapping. It's fairly boring and, unlike *Fire Emblem*, the story isn't that engrossing. Once you're in the battle, though, you'll start to notice differences.

Instead of just being split into turns, the game is actually split into hours and there are turns within those hours – if that makes sense. Before each turn starts you need to pick an order card, which lets you command your troops. This is when the game could have gone either

Armies of darkness

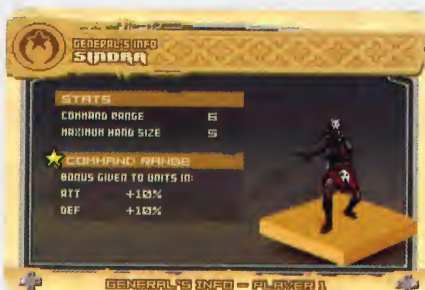
Playing as the Prince is for total losers

In the main game you have to play as the baggy-panted Prince, that's a given. But in the Skirmish mode you can play as whichever general you want. Clearly, you should play as the Evil general. They

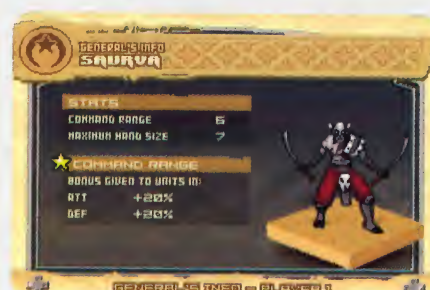
have armies made up of skeletons, like the ones in Jason and the Argonauts, but miles better. If you're playing in multiplayer, force your mate to play as the good guys, so you can be the skeletons.



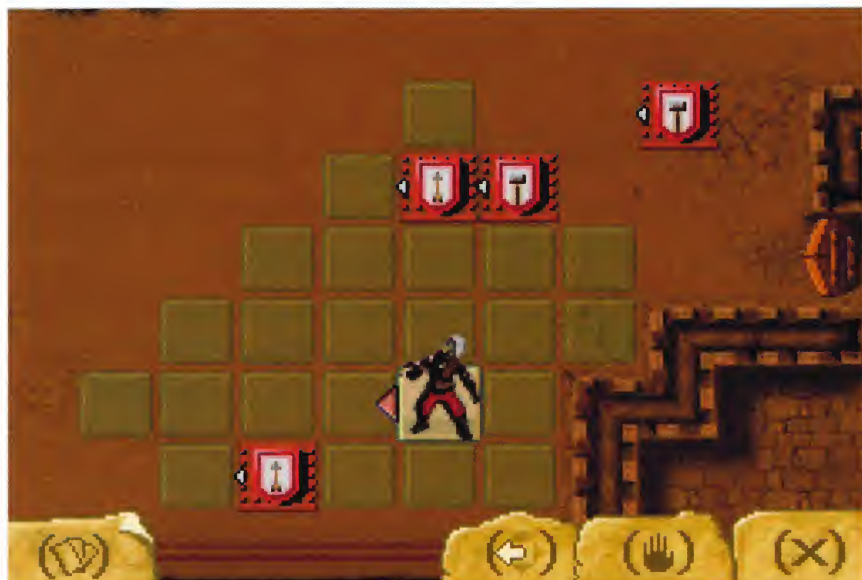
It's the Vizier. This guy should probably be tucked up in bed, but instead he's on the battlefield. Good on you, fella.



A woman. She'll nag the other army to death and then moan when they don't call her EVERY night.



An evil skeleton or just some kid in a Halloween costume. You decide. But he's probably an evil child in a costume.



Picking an order card before each turn adds a welcome extra depth to gameplay.



Don't worry kids, it isn't one of those nature films...



X Factor judges were hardcore back in the day

way. The cards could have made it into a poor man's *Yu-Gi-Oh!* but instead they add depth to the gameplay. Different cards have different effects, some let you just move a certain number of troops, others increase your stats and some even have magical spells.

As you complete more battles you unlock progressively better cards, which you can use to form your ultimate deck. You've got to be careful, though. You still have to have basic cards that let you move a certain number of troops, along with the more impressive cards. Otherwise you could end up with a super-tough army that can't actually move anywhere. Funny for your opponent, irritating for you.

The cards add an interesting element to gameplay. You've got to try and predict what your opponent might do next, so you can use the best card at the right time. Obviously, it can be frustrating when you're randomly dealt a crap bunch of cards. But in those situations you just need to adopt a more defensive stance until the next hour starts and you can get a new deck of cards.

When you've selected your cards it's time to start fighting. Surprisingly there's some kind of 'Triangle of Power' system for troops. This means certain units are more powerful against others, like bowmen who are good against pike men. That's pike men, not Pokémon. We imagine almost anyone armed with

just a shovel would be able to kill Mr. Mime. And we'd probably recommend it. The Triangle of Power helps to add yet another layer of tactics to a game which already resembles a thick onion.

So once you've decided who's powerful against who, it's time to start fighting. And, guess what? There are more tactics to be found. If you cause a lot of damage to an enemy unit it'll push them backwards with sheer force. Normally this would just send them back one square but if you're clever you'll position your troops behind them. This causes them more damage when they're knocked backwards. Plus, if they receive too much damage they might lose their nerve and run off towards the nearest exit. Troops who are broken need to be rallied round by your general otherwise they're a useless bunch of scared wimps.

So as you can see, *BOPOP* has a lot of depth for a game we were ready to snigger about. We thought it would be a cynical cash-in of epic proportions. But like the recent *Two Thrones*, it appears that Ubisoft have treated the Prince with a great deal of respect. It has bowed down at the Prince's feet and kissed the floor he walks upon.

Forget the ridiculous name because *BOPOP* is a tactical tour-de-force which can hold its head high among the likes of *Advance Wars* and *Fire Emblem*. Even if there aren't any tanks or dragons in it. But there are elephants.

Nintendo®

OFFICIAL MAG SAYS...

GRAPHICS **7**

Normally you'll just see a map, but when units battle it cuts to a scene of cel-shaded fighters waving their blades about.

SOUND **7**

All very Persian, really. We're not sure what people in Persia used to listen to but we think it was something like this.

INNOVATION **8**

Everything uses the touch screen, a bit like *Advance Wars*. The top screen is used to display useful info like stats and stuff.

VALUE **8**

There are random skirmishes and a decent multiplayer option to earn more cards. We'll play until we get a Charmander card.

MARIOS AND WARIOS

IT'S A REAL SURPRISE THAT THIS IS A DECENT GAME.

BY ALL ACCOUNTS, IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN TERRIBLE.

THE TACTICS ON DISPLAY ARE IN-DEPTH AND FUN.

A SUBSTITUTE FOR THE IMAGINARY FIRE EMBLEM DS.

THE TROOPS, WHETHER GOOD OR EVIL, LACK ANY REAL CHARACTER.

SOMETIMES YOU DON'T GET DECENT CARDS AND LOSE.

THE VERDICT

Rob A very pleasant surprise. It's got strategy in bucket loads and the card collecting even manages to be good. If you've finished *Dual Strike* this could be your next challenge.

Nintendo®
OFFICIAL MAGAZINE
JUDGEMENT

71%



GAME INFO

Out: **NOW!**
Price: **£29.99**
Players: **1-4**
Publisher: **THQ**



SpongeBob SquarePants: Lights, Camera, Pants!

Fun and games in Bikini Bottom sounds promising. Shame they're all over a little too quickly.

Apparently sea sponges are so simple that if you chop one up, stick it in a blender and then pour it into some water it'll reform itself. Simplicity is something Mr SquarePants is well acquainted with, for both good and bad reasons.

We're talking bare basics with only six characters to choose from when you start the game. The key players are here, so that's not all bad. We don't need Old Man Jenkins so long as we've got SpongeBob and Patrick. That's all that matters. Do unlockable characters really add anything to a game? Not much.

Lights, Camera, Pants! has also stripped away one of the most boring and tedious features of

most 'party' games: the board. This has been replaced by a nicely drawn out plot that takes you from stage to stage.

Mermaid Man and Barnacle Boy have come to town to film a new episode and they need actors. Each level is designed to find who's best suited to each part. Each character plays the part differently, so there's some incentive for repeat playing.

This means there's no more turn-based nonsense, we get straight down to the action. We're not interested in collecting icons

or money. We just want games. There's certainly plenty of variety. Every mini-game is different to the last. You've got a bit of karting, a bit of drum bashing and even some fishing. But there are only 30 challenges and this is the game's biggest stumbling block.

As well formed and structured as it is, *Lights, Camera, Pants!* has a very short lifespan. There are nowhere near as many games here as there are in *Mario Party*. If you don't have the quantity then you have to make up for it in quality. Unfortunately it doesn't

succeed in this department either.

It's a problem that exists in just about every 'party' game. The games, at best, are mediocre. There are plenty of them and they're short and sweet, but ultimately they're average. There's only a couple that you would want to play more than once. Even those, like the guitar-playing challenge, are just poor cousins of other games that do it better. It's certainly made some steps in the right direction, but just hasn't backed it up with enough solid mini-games.



Looks like Mr. Krabs had one too many Krabby Patties for lunch earlier...



SpongeBob's best mates are present, but don't expect any bonus characters



Take That had seen better days

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OFFICIAL MAG SAYS...



GRAPHICS

7

Great look that recreates the cast superbly. Very colourful, but hardly mind-blowing.



SOUND

7

Lots of banter, if a little repetitive. All the familiar voices and quirky in-game music.



GAMEPLAY

5

Quick and to the point, but limited. Play through once and you'll have it completed.



VALUE

5

Plenty of extras to unlock, but nothing to keep you coming back.

THE VERDICT

[Jonathan Gordon] Fans of the cartoon might want to give this a look, but you'd be better off sticking with Mario and the Mushroom Kingdom massive.

Nintendo®
OFFICIAL MAGAZINE
JUDGEMENT

61%

GAME INFO

Out: **NOW!**
Price: **£29.99**
Players: **1-2**
Publisher: **THQ**



The Incredibles: Rise of the Underminer

Subterranean caped caper digs a hole for itself.

► Spandex has never been the most flattering form of clothing. Neither does it seem to be the most sensible garment choice for superheroes. For starters all your bumps are dangerously visible and they're the last places you want a swift kick aimed at. Beyond that, you're going to build up a bit of a sweat and end up with some serious chaffing.

The idea of another *Incredibles* game doesn't sit too comfortably with us. The emphasis here has been put on co-operation with Mr Incredible and Frozone playing together at all times. The two often need to combine in solving puzzles and defeating enemies. Actually calling them

'puzzles' is being rather generous. Trying to decide who a red or blue circle on the floor corresponds to isn't exactly Sudoku.

With eight or nine enemies on screen at any one time, two-player action can be pretty hectic. This is when the game is at its best. However, you've got to feel sorry for the poor sucker who ends up playing as Frozone. Handling his powers isn't easy. For instance, directional control of his Freeze Ray leaves a lot to be desired. Playing on your own isn't much better. You can switch between the two characters and

give commands, but chances are they won't be followed. Not too helpful during a robot rumble.

These mechanical terrors don't offer much of a challenge despite a decent AI. As each level begins, a newer and nastier robot is thrown into the mix, but they're all push-overs. In fact the introduction of these underwhelming menaces is just about the only sense you get that you're achieving anything. Don't expect many big boss battles, because there aren't any. All you've got are a couple of easily defeated wimpy wannabes.

At least it all looks nice. The frame-rate is smooth and there's plenty of detail to the backgrounds. Unlike the last game, it's mostly set underground so there are no dramatic skylines to enjoy, just rocks. But well rendered rocks, they're the best kind.

It all adds up to a playable game that isn't very engaging. There hasn't really been anything added to the gameplay since *The Incredibles*' last outing. A crying shame when you've got such entertaining and interesting characters at your disposal.



■ Underground graphics rock. Sorry, just couldn't help ourselves with that one...

■ On two-player don't get Frozone



■ Frozone struggles to control his ray. Wouldn't like to stand next to him in the gents...

Nintendo®

OFFICIAL MAG SAYS...

GRAPHICS 7
Smooth and sleek with some detailed backgrounds, but certainly nothing special.

SOUND 7
Dialogue's not too bad. Plenty of grunts and explosions, too. What more do you want?

GAMEPLAY 6
Two-player co-operation has promise. Not very challenging or engrossing, though.

VALUE 5
Chances are you'll fall asleep halfway through. Nothing here we haven't seen before.

THE VERDICT

[Jonathan Gordon]
It plays well and it's action-packed, but it's never entertaining. You can't have an adventure platformer without proper bosses?

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JUDGEMENT

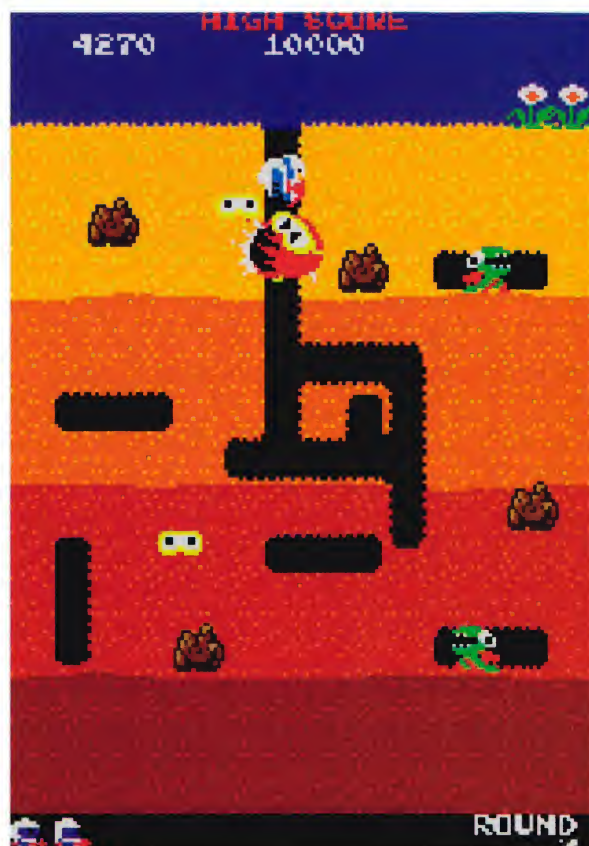
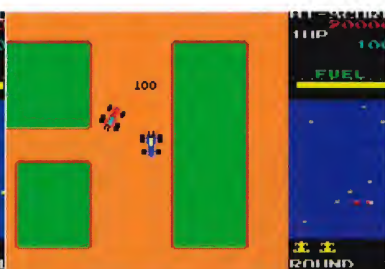
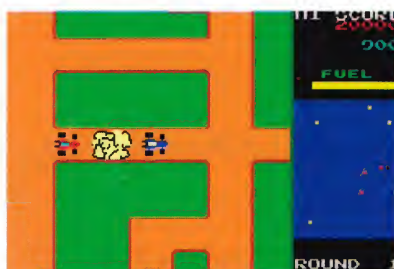
60%



■ Cheer up ghosts, you're chasing a girl



■ Killing bugs has never been such fun



Namco Museum 50th Anniversary

Is this latest time capsule a power pellet or a cyanide pill?

> Retro games, eh? They've been around since, well, probably since someone invented the **SECOND** video game. You can almost imagine the inventors of *Space Invaders* looking back at *Pong* and wryly

observing its kitsch charms. "White bats on a black screen? What WERE they thinking?"

That's the trouble with the human race. Each and every new generation thinks it's reached the goddamn zenith

of creative achievement. It's like those vomit-inducing BBC2 programmes you watch on Sunday night to kid yourself the weekend's not basically dead and gone: I ♥ 1986, where a bunch of nobodys giggle and wink their way through three hours of vintage TV. The upshot? Hairstyles were slightly different 20 years ago, but everyone clearly had a lot more talent. We're telling you, pretty soon the entire planet is going to disappear up its own asshole.

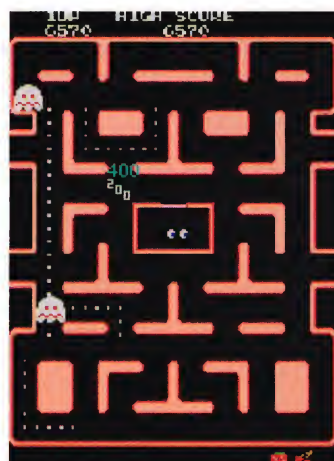
Were games better back then? Well, they were simpler, for sure. So simple, in fact, that with a few weeks training you could make them yourself. No lying around in your tracksuit, farting and complaining that the particle effects on Samus' plasma beam were rubbish. You got a better idea? Make your own game. It was a brave new world of endless 2D possibilities and anyone cynical enough to suggest otherwise should have

GAME INFO

Out: **17 FEBRUARY**
Price: **£19.99**
Players: **1**
Publisher: **NAMCO/EA**



■ It's a high score! Can't wait to show my mates... ahhh, nuts



■ See, Ms. Pac-Man is like all women – never turns up on time

their eyes pecked out by little pixelated crows.

We know as well as you do that these retro collections are the spawn of Brad and Jenny in marketing. We know they're not about education or respect. This is just big business catching up. It wants a piece of the retro pie, but it's too late. Anybody who actually cares has already got ten gigs of the crap on their hard drive. And when you ask them to pay 20 notes for it in HMV they'll just laugh.

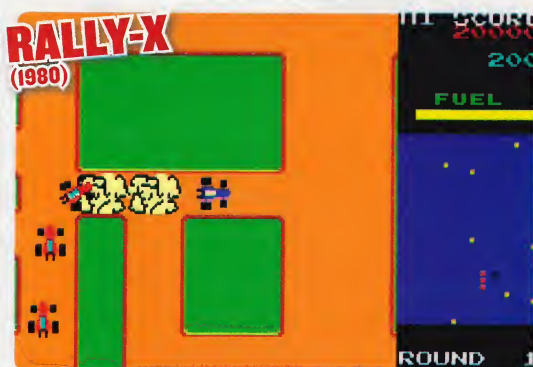
The retro heads are out there, but for every one of them there are a hundred, dead-eyed cretins squawking at blocky sprites and muffled 8-bit theme tunes on their phone. And they'll never buy this, either.

The Famous Five

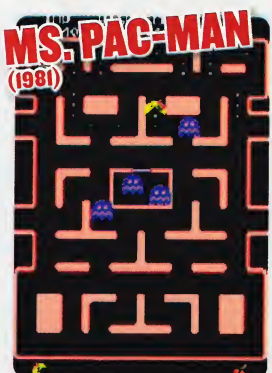
Julian, Dick and Timmy the dog played these in the '80s



PAC-MAN
(1980)
Pizza-inspired masterpiece sorted the game-world into ghost-hunting carnivores and map-clearing herbivores. Best bit: A freshly-cleaned board.



RALLY-X
(1980)
Essentially, this is just *Pac-Man* but with rally cars. You know, in the same way that baseball is cricket with idiots. The idea is simple – collect flags and avoid other drivers with the aid of a map. Your fuel gauge acts as a time limit and you can stun the chasing vehicles with your smokescreen. Best bit: Turning it off to play *Galaga*.



MS. PAC-MAN
(1981)
This is the BEST *Pac-Man* game, FACT. Smarter ghosts, more mazes and moving bonus fruit up the stakes. Best bit: Grabbing a full 1,600 ghost bonus.



GALAGA
(1981)
The sequel to *Galaxian* made noises now found on novelty keyrings, but they still sound amazing. Best bit: Shouting "Challenging stage" in a crappy Japanese accent.



DIG DUG
(1982)
A great game, inspiring the likes of *Boulder Dash* and *Bomberman*, both of which begin with a 'B'. Coincidence? Best bit: Crushing multiple Pookas with a falling rock.

If you're going to play these games, play them for the right reasons. They're GOOD games. That doesn't make this a good package, far from it, but the games themselves are as deliciously addictive as they were in their heyday. Some can even be played in their original, vertical 'tate' format – which will keep GBA contortionists happy – or in a zoomed-in view that lets you see the graphics in all their simplistic beauty. Not that they'll ever look right unless it's through half an inch of nicotine-stained glass. Unfortunately, they've all been on GBA in some form or other before, bar *Rally-X*. And why only FIVE games on the cart? Ah, they must be saving room so you can save your scores.

Err... you can't save your scores? No, that would be stupid, because *Pac-Man*'s all about the story line, isn't it? Good call there, Brad, you really earned your bonus on that one. Agh! Human scum! It makes you want to join *Galaga*'s dive-bombing aliens in their planet-scorching jihad.



■ Did you know the ghosts all have different strategies? It's true, I tell you

Nintendo®

OFFICIAL MAG SAYS...

GRAPHICS 10

Everything after 1982 is superfluous. The bow on Ms *Pac-Man*'s head proves this. It takes us back...

SOUND 10

Wacca-wacca-wacca... Get a phono-to-audio lead and hook this up to your stereo. Audio heaven.

GAMEPLAY 10

Simple and efficient. What else can you call pumping cartoon monsters with air until they explode?

VALUE 1

Five 56k games and no Save option. About as much use as a chocolate teapot or an ashtray on a motorbike. Good work, guys.

MARIOS AND WARIOS

EACH ONE IS A CLASSIC, EXCEPT RALLY-X. IT MUST HAVE GOT LOST.

GETTING TWO SHIPS ON GALAGA IS LIKE WINNING THE LOTTERY.

THE 'TATE' MODE IS COOL, BUT A BIT PAINFUL ON THE WRISTS.

THESE GAMES ARE ONLY MEANT TO BE PLAYED FOR TEN MINUTES AT A TIME.

TURN OFF AND THE HIGH SCORES ARE WIPED. WHAT IS THIS? 1980?

ONLY FIVE GAMES ON A CART THAT COULD STORE A THOUSAND.

THE VERDICT

No saved high-scores is like having a big hole in your head where your brain keeps falling out. It's messy and it doesn't make sense. **Kingsley Singleplum**

Nintendo®
OFFICIAL MAGAZINE
JUDGEMENT

55%



GAME INFO

Out: **NOW!**
Price: **£29.99**
Players: **1**
Publisher: **UBISOFT**



Peter Jackson's King Kong

It's big, it's hairy and it smells.

➤ If there's a golden rule of video games, it's this – monkeys are the kings. You put a monkey in your game and it's got to be good. Monkeys throw barrels, spit melon seeds and roll around in balls. They drive karts, bang drums and travel through time. Yes, monkeys, even more so than aliens, elves, zombies, L-shaped blocks, pirates, racing cars, spinning sticks, drill operators and plumbers, have made video games great.

So what's the anti-monkey? The flipside to its cheeky-faced coin? The evil to its good? The film licence, that's what. Film licences are the enemy of gaming. Think about it hard and

you probably can't name more than five films that made decent games. There was *GoldenEye*, yes. *Star Wars*, sure. *Aliens* is rather like *Metroid*, right? Yeah, but now we're running short of ideas.

Anyway, now *King Kong* has come along to test this theory, pitting monkey against film licence in a battle to the death. Well, the GameCube version wasn't too bad, so maybe this will be, too. Yeah right! This is GBA, remember? Where film tie-ins go to die.

Kong isn't going to buck

that trend. It's a weird mix of human-based *Superstar Saga*-style puzzle solving and side-scrolling action with a massive monkey. It's nowhere near as good as Mario and Luigi's RPG odyssey, but you do have to swap between characters and combine objects to get ahead. Jack does the fighting, Carl blows stuff up, and Ann heals the group and screams to stun enemies. Sexism? Who cares when the Kong sections are even more disappointing. There isn't the sense of scale or destruction force you'd expect,

and even when the King's rage bar fills up he just gets a bit faster and more powerful.

The music is where Kong really excels – it's got a tasty, bongo-laden soundtrack. But visually, this could have been ripped straight out of any console from the last 20 years. In fact, the human stage looks so much like the *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* arcade game we had to whack it on for a go. What a classic. Now there was a game. In fact, best make that four films that made decent games...



■ Kong v Rex: head-to-head in round one of the World Knuckle-Scraping Championships



■ Crabs – best avoided, really



■ Jack fights, Carl blows stuff up, Ann, erm, screams – and does the dishes. Perfect

Nintendo®

OFFICIAL MAG SAYS...



GRAPHICS

5

Very bland, but kind of comforting in an old-fashioned sort of way.



SOUND

7

Bongo tunes and screaming! What more could you possibly need?



GAMEPLAY

4

A stab at originality for sure, but very, very tame – even when you're Kong.



VALUE

5

There are lots of puzzles and the levels keep on coming. If you're awake.

THE VERDICT

You'd think controlling a 40ft monkey would be more exciting. Only for film fans and people who haven't played games since 1990. *Kongsley Songleton*

Nintendo®
OFFICIAL MAGAZINE
JUDGEMENT

55%

GAME INFO

Out: **NOW!**
Price: **£29.99**
Players: **1-4**
Publisher: **NINTENDO**



Touch Golf: Birdie Challenge

Not the birdies we were hoping for, but never mind.

It's fair to say that golf isn't the trendiest of sports. Plaid trousers, bottle green tank tops and bright yellow socks are commonplace. Fortunately, there's no dress code if you want to play *Touch Golf*. It's all inclusive, unrestricted, no-holds-barred club-swinging action. You won't even be excluded if you only wear your undies, but you will get some funny looks – especially in public.

You may not think to give this game a second glance, but maybe you should reconsider. This is the most interactive golf game ever made. That may not get your blood pumping, but it's a fact.

As with so many other games developed for the DS, the controls take some getting used. Once

you've cracked them there's no turning back. You'll be hooked.

Hooking and slicing is something this game excels at. Chances are that the ball will be flying in all directions when you first pick it up. As you become more accustomed to the controls, however, you can start performing more advanced techniques, like adding backspin. Before long you'll be able to appreciate the subtle arc of a powerful drive off the tee.

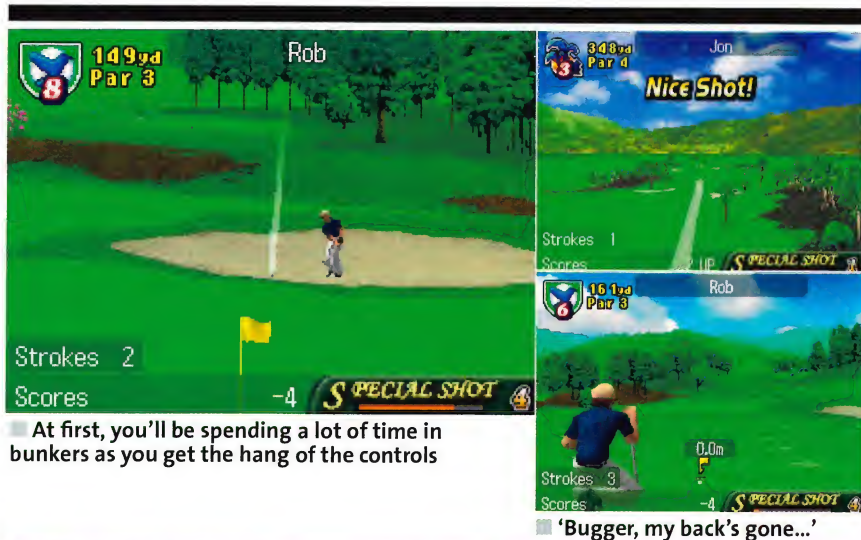
Generally speaking, it's not a bad-looking game. The animation of the golfers is excellent. You get

to choose the appearance and temperament of your golfer when you start, which essentially gives them a personality and defines how they'll react to every shot. They hang their head, punch the air and even show off by spinning their club around their fingers. It really gives you a character you can get behind as well as control.

Unfortunately, the backgrounds don't hold up quite as well. They're ropery and detract from the overall look of the game and while the courses themselves look nice enough, they are rather samey.

It doesn't really offer much beyond being a golfing sim, either. There is the possibility of performing 'Special Shots', but these are just a little more powerful, or add a little more spin. Nothing very extraordinary.

Touch Golf is ground breaking in terms of its controls – we've not seen anything like it before – but it's ultimately just a golf game and nothing more. Certainly worth a look if you fancy yourself as a cyber Tiger Woods, but unlikely to excite any gamer who isn't already into golf.



At first, you'll be spending a lot of time in bunkers as you get the hang of the controls



There's no dodgy golfing attire, but the pixelated backgrounds are pretty offensive

Nintendo®

OFFICIAL MAG SAYS...

GRAPHICS 7

Flawless body movement and animation, but backgrounds can often look pixelated.

SOUND 7

Cheering and clapping does wonders for your self-esteem. The muzak is rubbish.

GAMEPLAY 8

This is the way forward for golf games. Not always easy to judge power, though.

VALUE 7

With wireless multiplayer and an excellent Championship mode, this is golf heaven.

THE VERDICT

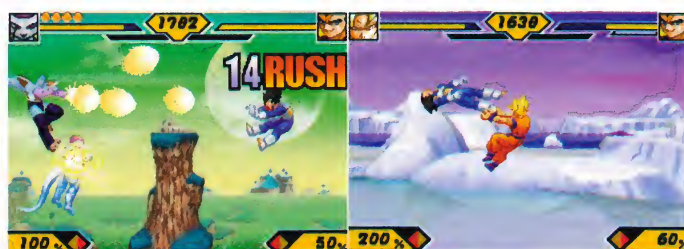
Jon Innovative controls and great interaction fail to disguise the fact that it's a golf game. It's a good golf game though and one that all future titles will have to be judged against.

Nintendo®
OFFICIAL MAGAZINE
JUDGEMENT

76%



■ You want to go and see a doctor about that hand swelling, mate



■ Charge up your abilities and you too can throw cotton wool balls!

Dragon Ball Z: Supersonic Warriors 2

DBZ is back, ready to frazzle your retinas and mess up your hair.

GAME INFO

Out: **20 JANUARY**
 Price: **£29.99**
 Players: **1-2**
 Publisher: **ATARI**

What's the point of WWE? Men in too much Spandex grappling each other in a slightly homoerotic fashion. There's nothing butch about pile driving. It's only a few inches away from being a position in the Kama Sutra. Wrestling is for losers. But get two men in an arena where they can fly about and launch fireballs at each other, then you're talking. That's **FIGHTING**. Not touchy-feely muscle men.

So it's yet another *Dragon Ball* game but actually we quite like *DBZ* at the moment. After we played *Advanced Adventure* on GBA we were suddenly rather interested in the exploits of Goku and his quest to grab some dragon's balls. So when *Supersonic Warriors 2* arrived in the office we were suitably interested. So

interested, in fact, that we stopped playing *Mario Kart DS* for a whole five minutes. Incredible.

The game charts the stories of many different *Dragon Ball* characters from a variety of different legacies. There are many familiar faces to those who roughly know the *DBZ* stories, like Goku and Krillin, along with other characters who may not be instantly recognisable, like Trunks and Android #18.

The Story mode is where you'll learn more about these fighters through some pretty simple cut scenes before matches. It's actually quite interesting for those familiar with the *DBZ* story because the Story mode changes the original scripts depending upon how you fare in the battle. So you could play as the evil Freiza and basically take over the world, or be Goku and stop Freiza dead in his tracks. For fans, all these 'what if?' scenarios will be a lot of fun but for those unfamiliar with the legacy, it's just lots of pointless text to sift through.

Once you've either read the text or skipped through it yawning and shaking your head to keep awake, it's time to fight. Those expecting a *Soul Calibur*-style combo extravaganza may be disappointed because the combat is fairly simple. Think *Smash Bros.* but with more spiky hair and big eyes. You have weak and strong punches used to pull off some short combos of about three hits. But the more spectacular moves are pulled off once you've charged up your super abilities. Then you can unleash some fairly incredible moves that light the DS screen up like a Christmas tree. The special moves are context sensitive too. So, depending upon where you are on the screen, the move will change. It does mean the fighting is simple, but lacks any real depth.

This kind of simple fighting system was probably introduced because you fight almost entirely in the air. Any kind of complicated move system that involved the D-Pad would have made your character fly around like a dying

sparrow. In the first *Supersonic Warriors* flying about was actually a pain, it felt like you were gliding through jelly. And it was jelly that had been poked about by kids... so really horrible jelly. Luckily, the sequel has been greatly improved and the flying feels a lot nippier. You can even home in on your enemy with a special dashing move. This certainly helps to make sure the game doesn't lack pace, which was a real problem with the original. However, it doesn't really beat the classic *Street Fighter II*-style side-on clashes. It's a nice idea that matches the *DBZ* formula, but we'd hate to see Ryu suddenly flying about.

Another element that's been updated in the sequel is the inclusion of support characters. You see, no fighter in their right mind goes into a bout without the help of their pals anymore, it just doesn't make sense. So in *Supersonic Warriors 2* you can create a team of fighters who you can swap between during fights and press when you need some

Super Clashes

Like an atom bomb going off in your pants. Sort of

With all the super moves flashing about the screen, there was bound to be some trouble. Well there is, and it's when both characters attempt to pull off a move at the same time. Then you have to battle to see whose move is more powerful. Things would have been easier if one of the characters had a gun...



That little picture of Super Saiyan Goku means things are about to get nasty



Fireballs try to fizz into their heads. Hammer the buttons to win the battle



After nearly crushing our DS with hardcore pressing, we finally take the honours

support. Wait a minute. Creating teams? Touching the screen to select fighters? Support characters? Someone's been playing *Jump Super Stars* and that someone is the creator of *Supersonic Warriors 2*! They've tried to make a *JSS* clone. Unfortunately though, the action's no way near as intense. *JSS* is a masterpiece and you'd be foolish to try and recreate it.

Then again, *JSS* is never going to come out here in a million years, so perhaps *Supersonic Warriors 2* is your only chance to play a decent DS beat-'em-up. And it's not actually that bad. There are times when the AI can be a bit like a rollercoaster ride and each character is controlled in pretty much the same way. But most of the fights are fun, even if the idea of tactics has been thrown out the window.

It would have been nice to have a bit of variation in the levels, like having to beat an opponent within a certain time, or avoiding getting hit. But now we're just thinking about *Jump Super Stars* again. Oh fickle fate, why must you mock us?



Looks like this is going to end in tears...

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OFFICIAL MAG SAYS...



GRAPHICS

7

Not as detailed as *JSS*, but they're pretty smooth. The backgrounds are kind of 3D too, but not very impressive.



SOUND

6

It's very quiet. We think there's some rock music in there somewhere, but you need supersonic hearing to notice it.



INNOVATION

5

Not great. It's got a similar support character system to *JSS* but the bottom screen is used for little else.



VALUE

7

You want 30 characters? You want multiple stories? You want chocolate ice-cream? You can have them! Apart from the last one.

MARIOS AND WARIOS



THE FIGHTING MOVES ARE SUITABLY OVER-THE-TOP.



THE DIFFERENT STORY LINES ARE PRETTY INTERESTING.



CONTROLLING CHARACTERS IS RELATIVELY EASY.



SUPPORT CHARACTERS ARE ALWAYS A LOT OF FUN.

WELL IT'S NOT *JUMP SUPER STARS*. SOB SOB SOB.



THE FIGHTING DOESN'T HAVE MUCH DEPTH TO IT.



THE VERDICT

Rob It's the best DS beat-'em-up in the UK. But that's because it's the only DS beat-'em-up in the UK. Although it is a fun but simple fighter that will appeal to Dragon Ball fans.

Nintendo®
OFFICIAL MAGAZINE
JUDGEMENT

70%



Dynasty Warriors Advance

War! What is it good for? Absolutely nothing.

➤ Other incarnations of *Dynasty Warriors* resemble *Spartan* in their multiple enemy, button-bashing action, and makers Koei have tried in vain to transfer some of that to the GBA version. It's been understandably scaled down, but the end result is disappointing. Taking on a 21-strong unit, five at a time isn't so bad. Pulling off combos to take them all out in one go is great fun. However, poor animation and movement really let it all down.

The top-down view means enemies can surround you, but the lack of subtlety in your movement makes targeting difficult. You really need to concentrate on one direction at a time. It also doesn't help that you glide rather than walk. The concept of multiple-enemy battling may have translated better to a side-scrolling beat-'em-up than to this top-down view. Not a very 21st Century style, but possibly more effective. As it is the battlegrounds are visually unimpressive and are often

repeated. Besides a few scattered bonuses, there are no interactive elements either.

The lead up to each battle also frustrates more than it captivates as turn-based elements have been included. You move around a map towards the set objective, clashing with the enemy on the way. This gives the impression of needing some strategic sense, but really it's an attempt to avoid needing a coherent plot. There really isn't much tactical know-how needed.

The maps and tactics are just a

couple of examples from a long list of over-compensations on *DWA*. None of the three playing modes offer anything very different from one another. There are about 230 different weapons to be found, however these are scattered randomly around the game maps and can't be swapped mid-battle.

The original *Dynasty Warriors* format was never going to translate to the GBA well, but the cobbled together arrangement of features that we're left with just doesn't do it justice.

GAME INFO

Out: **NOW!**

Price: **£29.99**

Players: **1**

Publisher: **NINTENDO**



■ Who'd have thought a trip to pick up a Christmas tree would turn so violent?



■ Top-view is OK for moving around, but side-scrolling action would be better for fighting

■ 'C'mon, I'll have the lot of ya!'

Nintendo®

OFFICIAL MAG SAYS...



GRAPHICS

5

Backgrounds lack detail and sprite movement is very poor.



SOUND

6

Solid sound effects and voice work. Not sure about heavy metal in ancient China, mind.



GAMEPLAY

5

Tries to be too many things and fails to excel at any. Ends up just being average.



VALUE

6

Loads of options and upgrades. Maybe even too many. You'll get bored pretty quickly.

THE VERDICT

It could have been the GBA's *Spartan* but *DWA* stumbles and falls by over-complicating things. Sometimes enjoyable, but mostly dull. **Jonathan Gordon**

Nintendo®
OFFICIAL MAGAZINE
JUDGEMENT

61%

GAME INFO

Out: 24 FEBRUARY

Price: £29.99

Players: 1-2

Publisher: ZOO DIGITAL



There was a time when the only thing that anyone wanted or needed from a racing game was good handling. Those days seem to have passed us by as being able to customise your ride becomes more and more important. Now it's about tinted windows, neon under-lighting and flame vinyls. Too often this results in other elements of the game being ripped wholesale from previous titles, or simply neglected.

The latter would appear to be true of SRS. Its faults are so glaringly obvious that they could only have been ignored for them to pass through whatever quality control exists at Zoo. The frame-rate deserves particular

Street Racing Syndicate

I've been driving in my car; it's not quite a Jaguar.

ridicule. It's so slow you can virtually count the frames. Kick in the Nitro and it's like watching a slideshow. Despite a good 3D engine, the graphics in general are poor, with lots of pop-up and grainy surfaces.

We're not entirely sure, but we don't believe that the road surfaces of LA, Miami or Philadelphia are made of ice. We mention this only because that's what it seems like we were driving on most of the time. Apply anything more than

momentary pressure on the D-Pad and the back end of the car swings out. It's ridiculous, but despite being unable to control the car, you can still finish first. Doesn't say much for the AI, really.

Those are the big gripes out the way, but there are still plenty of minor ones to come. The music is supposed to be in some sort of 'Street' style and although it's not irritating, it doesn't warrant praise. Whether travelling at 20 or 120mph, the engine sounds almost the same. When you

switch on Nitro it just sounds like dustbins being knocked over – and we better mention that green lights no longer mean go. In SRS you have to wait an extra second, which invariably means wheelspin and a poor start.

SRS is a masterclass in how not to make a racing sim. Who gives a monkeys about there being 40 cars and dozens of upgrades if you can't even steer properly? A little more time spent making it playable and less making it 'cool' would have gone a long way.



Control over your car is limited. 'Streets' are more like ice rinks in the handling stakes



Graphically this game sucks, much like the graphics on the cars, in fact

Nintendo®

OFFICIAL MAG SAYS...



GRAPHICS

4

A decent 3D engine is completely ruined by the awful frame-rate and grainy surfaces.



SOUND

5

Usual sub-standard 'street beats' that we've come to expect from this genre of games.



GAMEPLAY

3

Terrible control and witless AI, so no challenge, other than stabilising your car.



VALUE

3

Plenty of challenges and a multiplayer, but would you admit to getting this game?

THE VERDICT

If all you want from racing games are bikini-clad girls and decals you need a life, not SRS. No one deserves to have to play this game. Jonathan Gordon

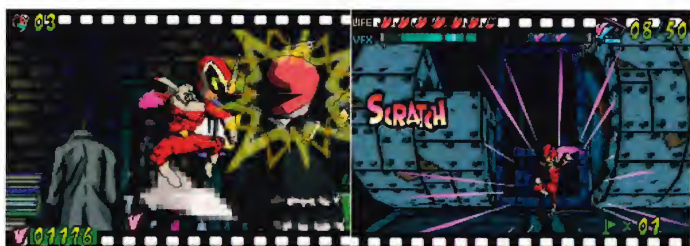
Nintendo®

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE
JUDGEMENT

24%



No, you're not seeing things, these graphics *are* from a handheld!



'Over 'ere son, on me 'ed' Joe gets down to kicking some robot ass

Viewtiful Joe Double Trouble

GAME INFO

Out: **FEBRUARY**
Price: **£29.99**
Players: **1**
Publisher: **CAPCOM**



Poor old Joe, one minute he's starring in the bin marked 'BARGAIN', looking at you with his pleading eyes just like all superheroes who have fallen on hard times. It's getting so bad that he's even slowly turning back into ordinary Joe on the front of the boxes. He's resorted to buddying up with Captain Planet at the Superheroes Anonymous meetings on a Wednesday night at the community centre. He's had it with saving Movieland, now you've got to save his Wednesday nights.

Now the *Viewtiful Joe* series takes a turn down DS's blind alley, the one littered with tramps like *Sprung*, huddling close to his *Ping Pal* around the drum

Joe's not eaten two curries on the bounce, instead he's on two screens. Hooray for the DS!

that's burning stray *Robots*. But *Double Trouble* isn't going to lead a wretched life. Joe's got a secret part of his gaming DNA called innovation and by god he's going to use it.

Double Trouble simply takes the dual screen version and flips it on its head, back-flipped of course, usually in slow-mo while draining the VFX meter.

Now you'll be touching, scratching and sliding to bust the puzzles and robot ass that stand in your way in every room you enter. You'll be jumping between the action buttons and the stylus. Sounds simple doesn't it? Well it isn't. Sometimes you'll take five or six attempts to drag something onto the bottom screen as robots are coughing their metal phlegm in your face and taking down your heart meter. When there's nothing around it works first time. It might just be us, but in the thick of the

action it takes more than one try. Don't bother with your finger either, you need the precision touch of a stylus for scratching boulders out of your path.

And here lies one of the

problems with *Double Trouble*. We'll slap the backs of Clover Studios when we see them next for pushing the DS, but hopping between the action buttons and the stylus can get infuriating.



Attacks of the future

This is what we'd like in Double Trouble 2

POETRY!

What Love Is

Love is being patient
Love is being kind
Love is giving of yourself
Love is making time

Love embraces God
When people seem untrue
Love is reaching out to those
Who humbly reach to you

Sylvia won't star in another *VJ* game until you propose over a candle lit hamburger and fries for two. Recite a romantic rhyme and win her heart.

COMMAND!



Duck! Kick! Punch! Forget the action buttons and yell your commands. Leaves the stylus free so you can destroy those puzzles.

SING!



Joe and Sylvia have been locked in a Karaoke Bar and must sing a duet to get out. Belt out *Summer Nights*, with your bird doing Sandy's parts, to get out alive.

Try it on a train, next to a fat lady and we guarantee she'll be glaring at you like you're a man-sized candy floss-flavoured Dunkin' Donut she has to devour, in one.

The rest of *Double Trouble* keeps within the same rules as you'd expect from the *VJ* series. Slow down time, speed it up, grab the Viewtiful booty and power up Joe with extra health and attacks. Yet something's got lost down that tramp-filled alleyway en route. It's lost the mayhem we used to endure.

That's the problem. The price we've had to pay for the sugar-coated graphics on two screens means the brawling chaos is more of a Sunday stroll than a running hooligan battle between Joe and the Millwall robots. There never seems to be more than two critters at once and getting those chain reactions to trigger is a piece of cake. The mental beauty of the GameCube legend has been laid bare. Now it's just a pretty looking action puzzler, with a few boss fights in between.

The end of scene bosses are mint though. Giant Robot Cops, one with wailing sirens that gradually fade as you clatter his

body into pieces, is one highlight. So too are the missile battles with robot troops ambushing you in a sports stadium. Throw in a couple of tanks from the wings and just watch the 3D fire its rocket boosters for your gaming pleasure.

It's not all about Joe's trek through Movieland though. He is the main man of course, but he's got a lady on hand to taste life in front of the cameras. One scene sees her leaping across a giant cityscape without any VFX powers. You'll have to wait and see if she busts loose with any cool moves later in the game...

After hours of cracking robot heads we're slightly bemused by what's offered. There's just something missing from Joe's arsenal. The electric pace has gone, and even if some of the puzzles that have replaced it are demanding, it just doesn't quite feel the same *Viewtiful Joe* we've come to expect. Technically, the DS has been pushed to its limits and the 3D is something to behold especially when running on two screens at the same time. Just think of it like a glorified puzzle game though and you won't be disappointed.

Nintendo®

OFFICIAL MAG SAYS...



GRAPHICS

9

The DS has obviously been to boot camp and pushed to breaking point. It looks amazing, even if the cut-scenes are corny.



SOUND

6

Suitably atmospheric when it needs to be, but there are no voiceovers in the cut scenes. Plenty of Henshins and Yummies on offer.



INNOVATION

9

They didn't use the mic, but the touch screen has been used to invent some very creative puzzles.



VALUE

7

It will take some time to do the later parts of the game but there's nothing to come back to. Not even multiplayer.

MARIOS AND WARIOS



A GAME SHOULDN'T LOOK THIS GOOD ON A HANDHELD, BUT THIS ONE DOES.



THE TOUCH SCREEN FUNCTIONS MAKE FOR SOME MINT PUZZLES.



EVERY GAME SHOULD HAVE SOME OF THESE BOSS BATTLES.

THE ACTION IS PEDESTRIAN AT BEST. *VJ*'S CHAOS HAS BEEN LOST.



MIXING UP STYLUS AND BUTTONS WILL GET YOUR FINGERS IN A TWIST.



THE LADY LEVELS ARE NOWHERE NEAR AS GOOD AS JOE'S.



THE VERDICT

Tim It's Double Trouble by name, double trouble by nature thanks to its underwhelming fighting and annoying controls. It does look mint though and at least they utilised the DS's full potential.

Nintendo®
OFFICIAL MAGAZINE
JUDGEMENT

75%

GAME INFO

Out: **NOW!**
Price: **£29.99**
Players: **1**
Publisher: **UBISOFT**



Dogz

Something, namely this, has been sniffing *Nintendogs'* bum.

Now, before we get letters, let's clarify. *Dogz* actually came out **BEFORE** *Nintendogs*. But Ubisoft has clearly decided to publish it over here because *Nintendogs* has been bigger than a massive bouncy castle at a child's party. In fact, we wrote about this game in *Big in Japan* in issue 155. Then we only knew it as *Kawai Koinu Wonderful*. Now we know it as *Dogz*, but is it really that wonderful?

Well, that's a tricky question. *Nintendogs* has really spoilt us. It's revolutionised the world of virtual pet games. Now any pet game which doesn't let you shout at and stroke your pet seems dead boring.

Dogz obviously doesn't let you actually shout at your dog and, as much as we tried poking the GBA screen, the dog didn't appear to respond.

So what does it do? Well, it gives you the experience of being a little boy or girl who owns a dog. Actually the dog's almost secondary to the main part of being a little boy or girl. You have to go to school, eat meals and even vacuum the house. Crikey, it's like *Animal Crossing GBA* but the only person in your town is a dog... and it doesn't speak.

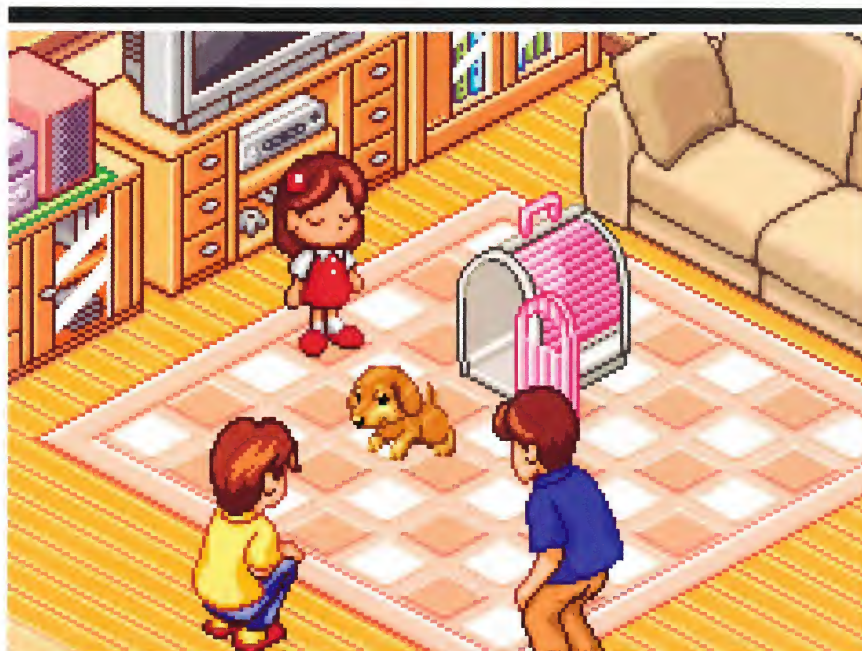
When you're not faffing about having to go to school, you can

train your dog. Before taking it for walks you have to teach it to sit and stay, but this aspect of training is a bit of a hit and miss process. You ask it to do something, like sit, which it may or may not do. If it does sit, you praise it. If it doesn't, you scold it. Training seems to take a long time and although that's more realistic than *Nintendogs*, it does get boring when all you want to do is teach your dog to sit so you can take it out to the vet and get its shots.

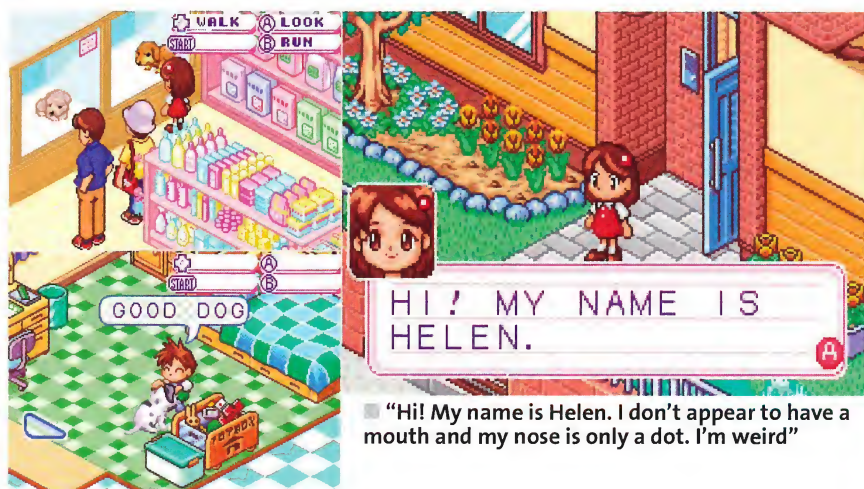
There really doesn't seem to be that many tricks available, either. Only very basic tricks like sitting, staying and simple

mathematics are on offer. Plus, making your dog wait for food seems weird, especially when it looks like the food disappears before he eats it. We're not sure if we were actually feeding the poor blighter, or not.

Although it may lack the incredible charm of *Nintendogs*, this isn't a bad virtual pet sim. It plays like a cross between *The Sims* and a dog training game. There's a lot to do, but the lack of being able to touch or actually talk to your dog hampers its longevity. It's perfect for a little girl who hasn't got a DS or a dog, but that's about it.



After escaping from the trap, the family jump to action ready to capture the pup



The dog finishes its homework

Nintendo® OFFICIAL MAG SAYS...

GRAPHICS 7
Nice and bright. The dogs bound about like the real thing. Some look weird, though.

SOUND 6
Just one song loops all the time. It's suitably jolly, but gets boring after a while.

GAMEPLAY 7
Played with a hangover, it seemed fun. If you're a little girl it's your dream come true.

VALUE 6
Train your dog enough and you actually "complete" the game. This could take ages.

THE VERDICT

No *Nintendogs* beater but it's a decent attempt to make a pet game. This could be the first in a long line of GBA puppy games. You've been warned. **Rob Burman**

Nintendo® OFFICIAL MAGAZINE JUDGEMENT

68%

GAME INFO

Out: **NOW!** (Unfortunately)
Price: **£29.99** (Too much)
Players: **1-4** (One too many)
Publisher: **UBISOFT** (Sob)



Rrrrrr rub ruuuubbbb
rubbbb ru ru ruuuuubbbjjii
ru ru rubbish rrrrrrubbish

rubbish rubbish. Terrrr terrrrrr
terrrr terrrrrrbbbbble. You get
the idea. This is one of the worst
games in the history of video
gaming. If we didn't already hate
the bloody Crazy Frog enough
already, this has cemented our
hatred even more. We would
rather slowly shove glass into
our eyes than play this again.

But let's tell you all about it, so you can seeth almost as much as we have since playing it. So, you've got the Crazy Frog who looks like a video game reject already. The developers could have gone either way, it could have made a by-the-numbers

Crazy Frog Racer

Most annoying ringtone ever becomes the most annoying GBA game ever. Not crazy, just crap.

platformer or a crap racing game. In the biggest mistake since Sega giving a hedgehog a gun, someone decided a kart racer would be the way to go. And it's terrible. It looks like a mobile phone game that's been converted onto GBA.

The tracks are lacking any kind of inspiration. If you gave a three-year-old some crayons they'd be able to dream up more complex and imaginative tracks than this. The main colour is grey, most tracks are just a circle and the backgrounds are a terrible joke. Your racer glides along the track, which just slides underneath

your kart at a snail's pace. Even 150cc feels like you're playing as a granny who's driving to a picnic on a sunny Sunday afternoon. It's slower than the slow bits in *Prince of Persia*.

The racers are slightly amusing, if only because they're so misguided. You've got to laugh at the attempt to make fun characters. It's like that episode of the Simpsons when they show the other animals that made appearances in *Itchy* and *Scratchy*, like Uncle Ant, Disgruntled Goat, Flatulent Fox, and Ku Klux Klam. Those are funny characters. But when

you see Rasta Dog in *Crazy Frog Racer*, your jaw hits the floor. Bloody hell, why not just have Nazi Newt and Drunken Scottish Skunk? It's embarrassing to think that someone actually sat in a room somewhere and created Rasta Dog.

This is the worst kind of game. A cynical exploitation of kids who are misguided enough to think the Crazy Frog is cool. They'll buy this expecting to get something a little crazy, at least. But all they're getting is a crap racer with the Crazy Frog's stupid gurning idiot face on the box. Avoid at all costs.



■ This yellow snowman with a coathanger on its head is actually supposed to be a moose. Honest

Just look at those graphiczzz...



Hopefully, the Frog is about to crash. Then burn to death as his kart sets alight.

Nintendo®

OFFICIAL MAG SAYS...



GRAPHICS

If the Crazy Frog threw up on a grey pavement, it might look better than this.



SOUND

We'd expect to hear the Frog's stupid voice, but you don't. It's just crap engine noise.



GAMEPLAY

You hear that sound? That's *Mario Kart* laughing heartily at *Crazy Frog Racer*.



VALUE

There are different modes but they all play almost identically. Identically rubbish.

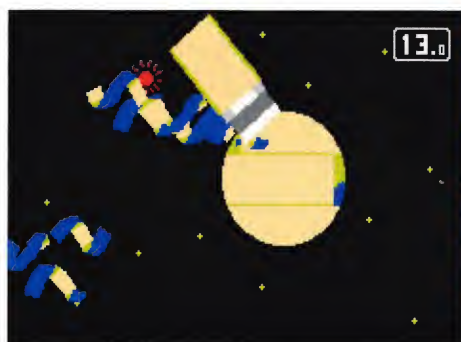
THE VERDICT

One of worst games we've had the misfortune to play. It's not remotely enjoyable. It's just a cash-in on a brand that was popular last year. **Rob Burman**

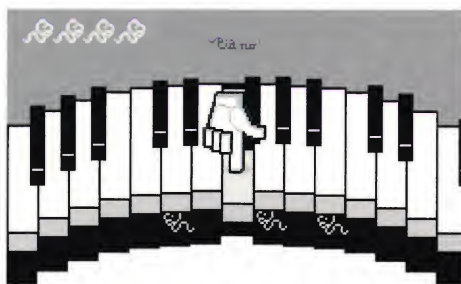
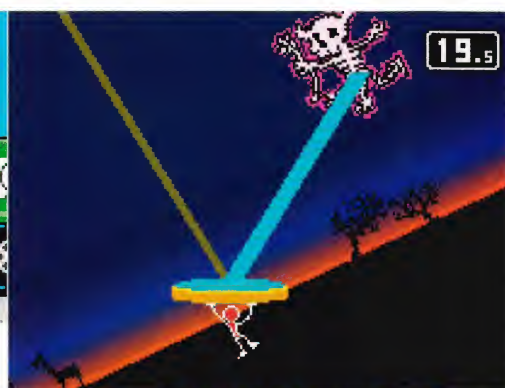
Nintendo®

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE
JUDGEMENT

05%



What's the brown stuff in the truck?
A pile of Yoshi's *Universal Gravitation*



GAME INFO

Out: **24 FEBRUARY**
Price: **£29.99**
Players: **1**
Publisher: **NINTENDO**



Wario Ware Twisted!



After sunning his fat ass in Majorca, Wario's finally bothering to release it.

➤ An oddly-shaped GBA cartridge walks into a bar. "Ah! You must be *Twisted*," says the barman. The cartridge nods. "So what do you do, sleep with your sister or something?" "Nope," says the cartridge. "*Twisted* as in you twist me around to play me."

You may have played the two previous *Wario Ware* games. Two and a half if you count the 'Cube one. But just when you thought the mini-game well might be running dry, Nintendo releases the best one yet. *Wario Ware Twisted* kicks *Touched* in the balls, pulls its

hair and sends it away crying.

Once you get over how cool it is to be actually slicing vegetables with a stylus, not much is weird about *Touched*.

Twisted, on the other hand, is out of its tiny little mind. You're yawning the GBA around in your hands like you're playing a video

game for the first time and you don't know what you're doing. You can casually lie on a bed poking at *Touched*, but *Twisted*'s very gameplay mechanic makes passive play impossible. You're engaged and your body is moving. It's brilliant.

How does it work? Magic. All this talk of a motion sensor in the cartridge is just Miyamoto smokescreening you. The sensor in the *Yoshi's Universal Gravitation* cart gave you three different positions and was knob. This is a fully analogue piece of witchcraft, with each degree of twist fed back to you with the world's sexiest little rumble click. The degree of control is utterly flawless and idiot-proof. Ever slashed at a carrot and missed in *Touched*? *Twisted* will never let you down like that.

Go on, admit it, you think

all the games are going to be the same as before, don't you? Wrong! Having to manoeuvre in a tight space has brought the best out of the mini-game brains in Kyoto. Imagine pulling on pegs attached to an alien's face so he catches falling fruit. Or how about violently jerking your GBA to the side to empty the contents of a dumper truck?

It's the variety of severity in the twist controls that make this a work of art. Trying to balance an umbrella on your fingertip, for example, requires regular and slight alterations.

Stopping a little guy getting crushed by a girder requires an almighty jerk. While moving a fence to pen in a pig will have you rotating the GBA 360° in your hands. Nintendo has wrung out every conceivable control possibility in a one-off classic you'd be mad not to own.

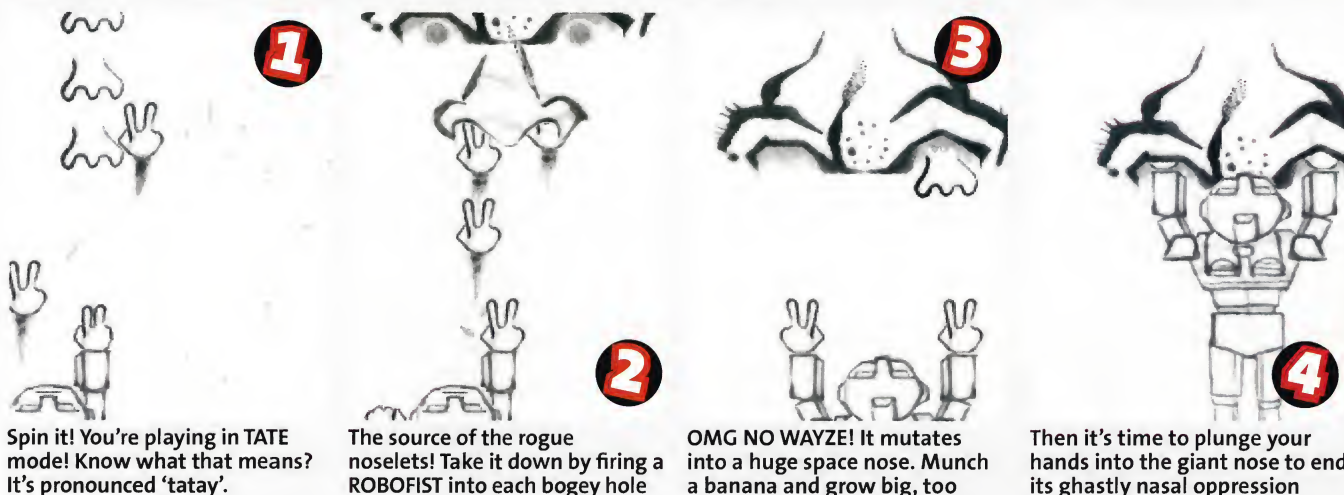


Just along the bar Wario snapped his fingers to get a drink

You nose it

Noses: Too much fun to remain unpicked...

Remember when it was about getting one finger into one nostril? And when you hit the septum in the heat of a four-player game, your mates fell off the couch laughing? Well, that was then. Welcome to the future.



The way the inspiration is sustained throughout is miraculous. When *Touched* introduced swirling the stylus, that was the start of you doing a lot of stylus swirling. Not here. For three seconds you're guiding together a pair of metal lovers with a magnet, then you're poking boiled sweets out of a fat girl's mouth, then you're peeling the world like a potato, then

you're playing a piano to kill bugs, then you're cutting hair, then you're deity bitch-slapping an infidel, then you're trying to jump over rocks to get to your dancing partner without falling on your face. All in the space of about half a minute. It's a wonder your brain can cope, but it still manages to send a message to your mouth to crack up laughing.

The downsides are minor.

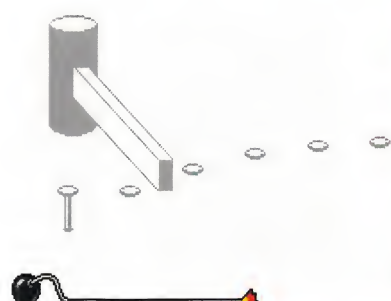
Some of the intro cut-scenes just ramble on forever. We don't know why they are even there in the first place. Nor do we really care that 9-Volt has been a naughty boy at school, just let us get on with the rotatery *Zelda*. Whoops, gave that one away. Also, the *Kat* and *Ana* games use only the **A** button, which again put you into passive gaming mode.

We can forgive that, because you have to stop an onion cracking the world.

The finale in this segment revisits classic *Wario Ware* nose-picking territory, only with a flying robot and a giant alien space nose. Before you think something clichéd about 'drugs', don't. The people who made this are geniuses. It's that simple. >>>



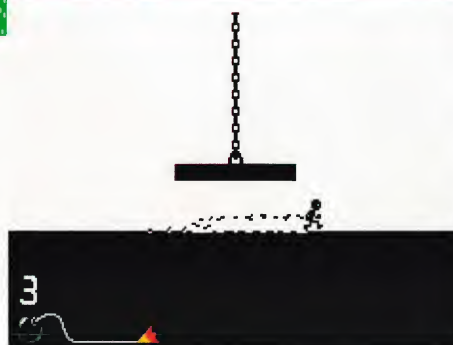
"Twisted is a one-off classic you'd be mad not to own."



One minute you're hammering nails in, the next you're blowing out candles. Weird



Don't do this in the barber's – you may lose an ear or a nose





HISTORY REPEATING

NES classics as you've never seen them before.

The 9-Volt games are always a highlight for hardcore Nintendo fans. But the way they are implemented with the twisty gameplay should win Nintendo a Nobel Prize. We're not going to tell you how each one works, because that would be a disgusting act of treachery. Nope, we'll lay a load out for you to try and guess for yourselves. Then, when you play the game, you'll be doubly amazed by just how wrong you were.





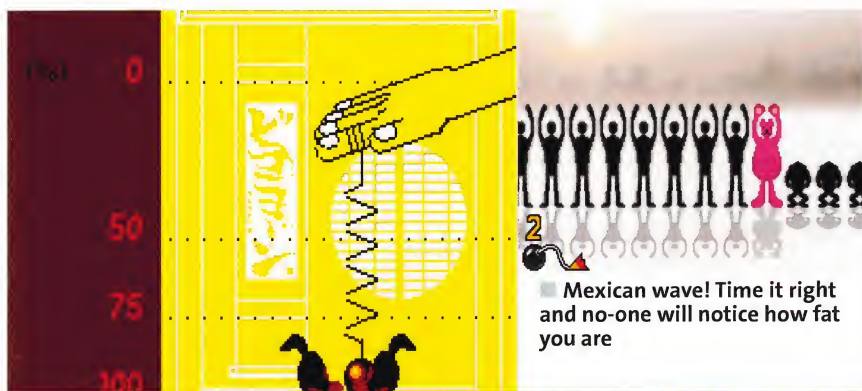
"This game is a one-off. If you don't buy it you're out of our club forever."

»» The Souvenir unlockables section completely shame the other *Wario Ware* games. It whips down their trousers so everyone sees that they're wearing tight, nylon Barbie underpants with a rip in the front.

The Games section includes a cracking ski-jumping sim and the conceptually-bizarre *Apple Assault* where you fire a stream of mini Warios out of a cannon to repel fruit and bombs. Add in various games of air hockey and a game called

Mewtroid where you're a little car pretending to be Samus and you're on Win Avenue in a golden car filled with money.

But the crowning glory has to be playing records by spinning the GBA around on a table with your finger. Or, you can press the GBA to your ear and get someone to whizz you around on an office chair. You boogie to the Mario theme, then fall off the chair hilariously dizzy. Like we said, this game is a one-off. If you don't buy it you're out of our club forever.



■ Mexican wave! Time it right and no-one will notice how fat you are



■ Those marks were put there by a scientist. Miss them and we may all be killed



Nintendo®

OFFICIAL MAG SAYS...



GRAPHICS

8

The retro games look basic (of course), but the art style on the new stuff will fix a permanent grin on your face.



SOUND

8

Functional effects, but they've picked some choice cuts for the Record mode. Like that dope jam from *Balloon Fight*.



GAMEPLAY

10

Original and brilliantly intuitive. The tilt sensor works so well you feel sorry for the one inside *Yoshi's Universal Gravitation*.



VALUE

9

An amazing, unexpected and unprecedented new experience for just 30 clams? How can you refuse?

MARIOS AND WARIOS



THE BEST WARIO WARE YET. THAT'S THE TRUTH, GET OVER IT.



THE TILT SENSOR WORKS SO BRILLIANTLY IT'S KIND OF A MIRACLE.



200 ALL-NEW MINI-GAMES THAT WILL CRACK YOU UP.



THE 130 'SOUVENIRS' YOU UNLOCK ARE AWESOME. SKI-JUMP IS THE NUTS.



THE SPINNING THE GBA BIT TO PLAY A RECORD IS ABSOLUTE GENIUS.

THE CUT-SCENES ARE DULL AND EAT INTO MINI-GAME STORAGE SPACE.



THE VERDICT

[Dean Scott] What you play is ace, but the way you play it is even better. One of the most original video game experiences in years. Utterly essential.

Nintendo®

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE
JUDGEMENT

94%

It may be too late to

Need for Speed: Most Wanted

Out NOW!
Price: £29.99
Players: 1
Publisher: EA

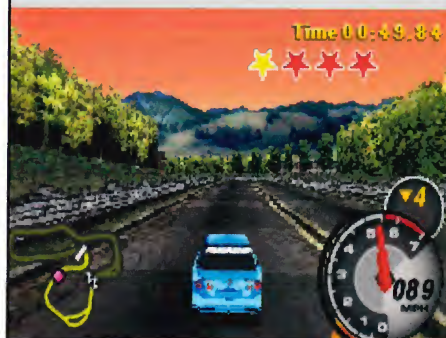


EA know how a car should handle. They've got that down cold, no question. It's a pity they haven't been able to sort out everything else. *NFS'* graphics, sound and gameplay are all flawed in some respect.

It simply doesn't look good enough. Black cars can't be seen as they melt into the background. The frame-rate is bad enough to make a game that should be all about speed seem slow, and the backgrounds aren't up to much either with pop-up and repetitive scenery.

The last time we checked, torture was still illegal in the UK, but *NFS'* sound effects have made us think again. The combination of soundtrack, engine 'notes' and screeching tyres sound like nails scratching a chalkboard.

The gameplay isn't up to much, either. Racing games lose a great deal of their playability if they don't feature a multiplayer function. The police chase elements that make this incarnation of *NFS* stand out, add little to the GBA version. All you've got is the Career mode and that just isn't enough.



Nintendo
OFFICIAL MAGAZINE
JUDGEMENT

52%

Peter Jackson's King Kong

Out NOW!
Price: £29.99
Players: 2
Publisher: UBISOFT



Let's give Ubisoft a ripple of applause for developing a *Kong* game just for the DS instead of repackaging the GBA version. Sadly, it wasn't worth the bother. This frustrating and seemingly unfinished mess wipes out any credit they've earned.

We know that much of this game takes place in dense jungle or in caves, but that's no reason for it to be so dark and foggy that you can barely see your hand in front of your face. Fortunately, Ann Darrow is constantly lit up like a Christmas tree, so you always know where she is. If we could actually see what was going on, the graphics would probably be pretty good.

The gameplay is just as frustrating. Strangely on Skull Island spears are considered more deadly than machine guns. It takes half a dozen clips to kill a single crab. There's no crosshair either, so bullets must be heat-seeking. We really couldn't tell and don't particularly care. The crabs walk sideways, though. Is that enough reason to buy this game? There's only one true Kong and he wears a tie.



Nintendo
OFFICIAL MAGAZINE
JUDGEMENT

30%

The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe

Out NOW!
Price: £29.99
Players: 2-3
Publisher: BUENA VISTA



If we wanted to know the story of *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe* we'd have read the book or gone to see the film. We don't need a game to tell us all about it, which is all this GBA version seems to want to do.

Our question is, where did the gameplay go? You just get dragged from one forced conversation to another with little sense that you're having any effect whatsoever. Worse still, even armoured dwarves can be dispatched with a kick.

It's not a bad looking game. The snowy environments all look much the same, but touches like leaving footprints give the game added atmosphere. The sound is chilling enough to convince you to put a jumper on, too.

Elements such as characters getting cold and needing shelter or a fire to regain strength are nice touches, but don't make up for fundamental weaknesses. If you're standing right in front of an enemy, but you can't be sure that your attack is going to hit, something is very wrong.



Nintendo
OFFICIAL MAGAZINE
JUDGEMENT

53%

save you from these

Big Mutha Truckers

Out: NOW!
Price: £29.99
Players: 1-2
Publisher: 200 DIGITAL



> Who was it that asked for a trucking game, eh? Come on, own up now. Somebody must have done and when we find out who it was we'll be driving a big mutha of a truck right through their front door.

The very premise of this game is flawed. Trucks are slow. Even when they're bombing down a motorway, caravans and Morris Minors still overtake them. You'll certainly never see a truck on *Pimp My Ride*. And here's a note for games developers in the future; if you want to make people change gear manually then give the vehicle more than two forward gears. That's just annoying.

Rednecks are pretty annoying, too. Unless you're forcing people off your land with a shotgun, why would you want to be one? *BMT* just doesn't seem to know what world it lives in. You get bonuses for crashing into cars and bikes, but can't do a job if you've taken damage. Cop cars won't chase after you for bumping into them, but Hells Angels will. The only thing that could've redeemed this game was an Orang-utan. Right turn, Clyde.



Nintendo
OFFICIAL MAGAZINE
JUDGEMENT

28%

Shrek SuperSlam

Out: NOW!
Price: £29.99
Players: 1-3
Publisher: ACTIVISION



> Here's a quick summary of some of the words you'll be seeing in this review. 'Rubbish' will probably feature quite heavily. 'Pitiful', 'pathetic' and 'offensive' will also make appearances. You might even see 'diabolical', too. *Shrek SuperSlam* is all of these things and less.

The prospect of a melee game on the Game Boy didn't strike us as a great idea, but *SuperSlam* was the last game we would've wanted to have a go at it. There were too few moves on the GameCube version and with only four buttons to work with, this version was only going to be worse. The controls are pathetic.

The battle arenas are pretty big, but that means you'll be chasing opponents all over the place. Some of them also have a few traps and falls, but because you can only see a small amount of each arena on your screen you'll walk into them without even knowing.

This game is a pile of rubbish. The fact that the *Shrek* name is attached to it only makes it more offensive. It's a pitiful effort that should be avoided at all costs.



Nintendo
OFFICIAL MAGAZINE
JUDGEMENT

18%

SpongeBob SquarePants: The Yellow Avenger

Out: NOW!
Price: £29.99
Players: 1
Publisher: THE



> *SpongeBob* games often give the impression that they've done something new, but actually they haven't. *The Yellow Avenger* continues this devious trend.

What you get is a 3D rendered side-scrolling platformer. It looks impressive until you begin to notice that it's incredibly slow. Clearly, there's no rush to save Bikini Bottom from certain doom.

It's a big game, too. There's a nice wide map and plenty of areas to unlock. But each area is relatively empty. To give the game a more free-roaming feel some RPG elements have been thrown in. You can talk to any number of familiar *SpongeBob* characters for side missions to complete, many of which incorporate the touch screen in some form.

The controls are this game's biggest weakness. Jumping between conventional control and the touch screen becomes annoying very quickly. Having to constantly hold the stylus in anticipation of touch screen antics is hardly ideal. It's all too gimmicky and unnecessary. Much like *SpongeBob*.



Nintendo
OFFICIAL MAGAZINE
JUDGEMENT

62%

KERRANG!
RADIO



FUNERAL FIGHTERS

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TO THE FOO FIGHTERS**

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Welcome to my last ever Mario's World. The gang and I aren't going to be here next month, just don't go writing to me about it.

» TOAD'S TIPS LAB » P.96



I've got all the Kart tips and short cuts you'll ever need.

» WARIO'S CHEATS » P.104



This is my last ever top 20. Now I can go home.

» WARIO'S READER CHEATS » P.106



You sent me loads of top tips but only nine were any good.

» PEACH & BOWSER'S ROYAL MAIL » P.108



Bowser will kidnap me after this issue. HELP!

» BOO'S BRAINERS » P.112



Boooooooo! It's the last ever 'doku. Thank God for that, I could never do 'em.

It's been a pleasure to answer your letters. Now I'm off for a well-earned holiday.



TOAD'S TIPS LAB



THIS MONTH: *Mario Kart DS* Track-by-track knowledge so you can take on the world with the multiplayer option

MUSHROOM CUP

FIGURE-8 CIRCUIT



SHORT CUTS: None.
WEAPONS: Perfect for Shell attacks. Look for racing lines to drop Bananas.
MINI-TURBO: You should be getting at least four Boosts out of these looping turns.
SNAKING: With long and wide straights this be Snake country. Boost away.
OTHER: Great track for practicing advanced techniques and skills.

CHEEP CHEEP BEACH



SHORT CUTS: None.
WEAPONS: The wooden bridge and jumps are good spots for Item drops.
MINI-TURBO: Nice round corners, but water will cancel boost charge.
SNAKING: Good wide areas when the tide is out, again avoid water.
OTHER: Crabs and Cheep Cheeps can really cramp your style. Watch out.

YOSHI FALLS



SHORT CUTS: None.
WEAPONS: Cancel out Boost pads by dropping Items just after them.
MINI-TURBO: This track is one big right turn. Plenty of sliding to be done.
SNAKING: Difficult. Stick to plain power-sliding for maximum effect.
OTHER: Keep to the upper level of this track to avoid the raging waterfalls – you don't want to fall over the edge.

LUIGI'S MANSION



SHORT CUTS: None.
WEAPONS: Shell opponents off course causing maximum damage.
MINI-TURBO: Chicanes offer great chance for left, right, left sliding manoeuvres.
SNAKING: Snake through the muddy area to beat slower Karts. But watch out for the tiptoeing trees.
OTHER: Much of the track is narrow, but can be beaten with practice.

FLOWER CUP

DESERT HILLS



SHORT CUTS: None.

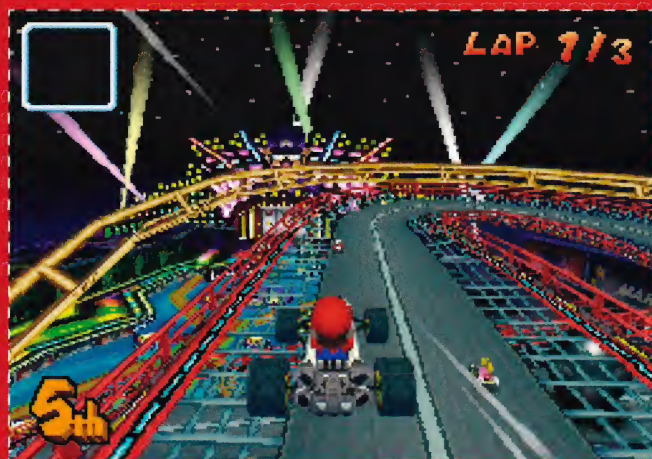
WEAPONS: There are plenty of blind corners to set traps for opponents. Drop those Green Shells!

MINI-TURBO: Winding, but narrow track. Good timing = 1st place.

SNAKING: Bumpy straights with roaming obstacles make life very difficult.

OTHER: Keep your eyes peeled for the Fire Balls, they don't stay still.

WALUIGI PINBALL



SHORT CUTS: None.

WEAPONS: The rotating bouncers are a good place for setting traps. Drop Items wisely.

MINI-TURBO: Plenty of room, but start early to get in extra Boosts so you can cruise into first.

SNAKING: Very limited with such a twisty course. Stick to Mini-Turbos.

OTHER: Watch out for the killer Pinballs on the lower screen.

DELFINO SQUARE



SHORT CUTS: Exit town, left before bridge, use Mushroom to the wooden pier.

WEAPONS: Narrow alleys are deadly with Green Shells pinging about.

MINI-TURBO: Difficult, but not impossible on most turns.

SNAKING: Even gifted Snakers will have difficulty on this one.

OTHER: Tip your Kart back over Boost bridge for a smooth landing on the other side.

SHROOM RIDGE



SHORT CUTS: None.

WEAPONS: Place Items between other vehicles where they're hard to avoid.

MINI-TURBO: First three turns have at least two Turbos in them. Lots more ahead.

SNAKING: Most straights can be Snaked, but buses and cars are a hazard.

OTHER: Watch out for the cliffs while Sliding.

KARTING SKILLZ Go online and represent your country against the best karters in the world. No pressure

SELECT KART

YOSHI



PICKING KART: To make the most of these techniques you'll need a kart with high Acceleration and Handling, but low Drift and Weight.



ROCKET BOOST: Start as you mean to finish. The boost start is vital if you want to get the gold. Hit A as 2 starts to fade.



SLIP-STREAMING: Hold position behind the kart in front for a few seconds, then pass. Nothing is more satisfying.

STAR CUP

DK PASS



SHORT CUTS: None.

WEAPONS: Play dirty by blasting Karts off the track with Shells and Bob-Ombs.

MINI-TURBO: Another twisting course with long 180° turns. Two or three Boosts, easy.

SNAKING: Bumpy and twisty, but the final stretches do offer some space.

OTHER: Watch out for Snowballs on lower screen.

MARIO CIRCUIT



SHORT CUTS: None.

WEAPONS: Look for the racing lines to drop Items on turns and chicanes.

MINI-TURBO: Lots of broad turns and chicanes for boosting into the lead.

SNAKING: Short straights can offer at least one extra Turbo.

OTHER: Hit Goombas with a Shell and they'll drop a Mushroom. Get it and roar away.

TICK-TOCK CLOCK



SHORT CUTS: None.

WEAPONS: Attacks should be made at first Boost pads and rotating cogs.

MINI-TURBO: Don't be fooled by the sharp edges, these corners are Turbo heaven.

SNAKING: Obstacle-free straights can be Snaked, but there's a risk of falling off the side.

OTHER: Ride on the cogs just before the finish line for a Boost.

AIRSHIP FORTRESS



SHORT CUTS: None.

WEAPONS: Try attacking in the Fiery Column room for maximum effect.

MINI-TURBO: With such a narrow track, low drift is essential to Turbo here.

SNAKING: The only straight long enough for Snaking is littered with obstacles.

OTHER: Barge opponents into the path of Bullet Bills.

KARTING SKILLZ (CONT.)



MINI-TURBO: Power-slide into a turn and alternate between left and right on the D-Pad to see blue, then red sparks. Boost away.



LAKITU: If you fall off the track, Lakitu will pick you up. Accelerate just as you hit the track for a short burst of speed.



KEEP PLAYING: True champs don't quit. There's no shame in losing if you come back for more. Show some respect and play on.

SPECIAL CUP

WARIO STADIUM



SHORT CUTS: None.

WEAPONS: The Boost pads, surrounded by mud, are an ideal war zone.

MINI-TURBO: Just about every corner can be used to good effect. Get to work!

SNAKING: Short and bumpy straights make it practically impossible to power-slide.

OTHER: With so many jumps and Boosts, cornering is the key.

BOWSER CASTLE



SHORT CUTS: In the Spinning Floor room ignore the first exit, taking the second.

WEAPONS: The most effective attacks are made on the cylinder. Brutal.

MINI-TURBO: Power-slide all the way up the spiral track, then release Turbo.

SNAKING: Boost away on the long, wide straights.

OTHER: Avoid Thwomps, but knock others into them.

PEACH GARDEN



SHORT CUTS: None.

WEAPONS: Close range attacks are your best option with bushes and walls everywhere.

MINI-TURBO: Mostly rounded corners, although the final chicane is too narrow.

SNAKING: Straights are largely too short and narrow for effective Snaking.

OTHER: Chain Chomps are pesky critters. Watch out for them.

RAINBOW ROAD



SHORT CUTS: None.

WEAPONS: Attack on the overhead loop to knock Karts off the track.

MINI-TURBO: The hairpin corners can be beaten with skill and experience. Keep practicing to become an expert.

SNAKING: The track is too narrow and unprotected to risk it.

OTHER: Try and memorise position of the Boost pads on the opening turn. They'll come in handy.

SNAKING Here at NOM we believe that Snaking is not a crime. Here's how to pull off this advanced manoeuvre



Snaking isn't always possible. You need a wide track and not too many objects in the way. Online play is the best venue.



Turn slightly to the left or right and then power-slide in the opposite direction. Perform a Mini-Turbo to hang the back end right out.



As the boost ends, power-slide in the opposite direction. Now you're Snaking! Repeat until the end of the straight.

SHELL CUP

MARIO CIRCUIT 1



SHORT CUTS: None.
WEAPONS: Dropping items amongst the pipes is pretty effective. Give it a go.
MINI-TURBO: Every corner is perfect for power-sliding. There are no excuses here.
SNAKING: The sand will really slow you down, but practice makes perfect.
OTHER: This track is old skool, so get medieval on their arses.

PEACH CIRCUIT



SHORT CUTS: None.
WEAPONS: There's no escape on this track. Trail objects to defend yourself.
MINI-TURBO: Show off your skills by getting Boosts on every corner of this circuit.
SNAKING: Plenty of room for Snaking. With no hazards, there are no excuses.
OTHER: Another straightforward track to prove your worth on.

MOO MOO FARM



SHORT CUTS: None.
WEAPONS: Bloopers are dangerous with Moles to dodge. Learn the course.
MINI-TURBO: No difficulty here, just don't drift too wide. You can lose precious time.
SNAKING: Some good straights here with only a few bumps to dodge.
OTHER: No fancy tricks here. This is pure karting at its best.

LUIGI CIRCUIT



SHORT CUTS: None.
WEAPONS: Attack on the corners. This will cancel out Turbos and Boosts.
MINI-TURBO: You should get a few in at each end of the track.
SNAKING: You won't find a wider piece of track. Slither your way to victory.
OTHER: Learn this track like the back of your hand. Everybody else has.

LOCK AND LOAD PART 1 Be a karting king by knowing the arsenal of weapons you'll come across



BANANAS: Place these in hard to see places such as after jumps. Hold them behind you to protect against Shell attacks.



GREEN SHELLS: These babies are most useful at close range while slipstreaming. They also protect against attacks.



RED SHELLS: Use these wisely by attacking on straights or just after Boosts to really hurt your opponent.

BANANA CUP

DONUT PLAINS 1



SHORT CUTS: Mushroom through the gap after the second right turn. Classic stuff.
WEAPONS: The bridge is the place to launch an attack.
MINI-TURBO: Try and get three Turbos around that final turn to take the lead.
SNAKING: Very tight so chances are limited. Get the most out of your Turbos.
OTHER: Light Karts don't slow down as much in the dirt.

BOWSER CASTLE 2



SHORT CUTS: None.
WEAPONS: Between lava pits and on Boost pads are the places to drop Items.
MINI-TURBO: Slide around those corners, but look for the Boost pads, too.
SNAKING: This is a narrow track. Give it a go, but it's difficult.
OTHER: Drive around the Boost jumps. They're often not much faster.

FRAPPE SNOWLAND



SHORT CUTS: None.
WEAPONS: Leave Items just before the jump so opponents fall in the river.
MINI-TURBO: There are some great corners here so take advantage of them.
SNAKING: Difficult, but not impossible if you know what you're doing. Get one Boost from straights.
OTHER: The course is slippery, which can slow reaction time.

BABY PARK



SHORT CUTS: None.
WEAPONS: Another track with nowhere to hide. Dragging items works well here.
MINI-TURBO: Get close to the inner wall as you slide, then release into straight.
SNAKING: Perfect, so get plenty of Boosts in on the straights.
OTHER: It's all about speed. Get the Turbos right and gold will be yours.

LOCK AND LOAD (CONT.)



BLUE SHELL: When you hear that dreaded swoosh coming, don't panic. Slow down so it takes out other karts.



FAKE ITEM: Use these like you would a Banana, but don't forget to place them amongst the Item Boxes. As effective as it ever was.



MUSHROOMS: Save these for the straights and just power-slide corners. They're most effective when used on short cuts.

LEAF CUP

KOOPA BEACH 2



SHORT CUTS: None.

WEAPONS: Attack around the water pits to really slow your opponents down.

MINI-TURBO: Left turns can all be slid around to full effect. Waggle that thumb.

SNAKING: Limited to just an extra Boost before some corners.

OTHER: Get to the island among the water pits for more items. Jackpot!

LUIGI CIRCUIT 2



SHORT CUTS: None.

WEAPONS: Puddles and grass make the chicane ideal for an ambush. Make sure you keep something back.

MINI-TURBO: Lots of hairpin turns. Perfect for a helpful boost up the ranks.

SNAKING: Concentrate on getting those corners right. Much more effective.

OTHER: Those puddles are in awkward places so be vigilant.

CHOCO MOUNTAIN



SHORT CUTS: None.

WEAPONS: Attack just after the boulders to knock Karts to the lower track.

MINI-TURBO: Get a couple of Turbos on first two right turns to take the lead.

SNAKING: Practically impossible on such a narrow course.

OTHER: Watch the boulders on the lower screen and mind that cliff, too.

MUSHROOM BRIDGE



SHORT CUTS: Just after the first tunnel, use a Mushroom up the hill.

WEAPONS: Drop items in tunnels where they're hard to avoid.

MINI-TURBO: Power-sliding while avoiding cars is a skill that takes practice.

SNAKING: The bridge is the ideal location, but watch out for that traffic.

OTHER: Getting the lead on that bridge is the key to victory.

LOCK AND LOAD (CONT.)



SUPER MUSHROOM: If you've picked up one of these you're in big trouble. Blast away and hope for the best.



BOB-OMB: Difficult to aim accurately but with a large blast radius that doesn't matter so long as you use it on a straight.



BLOOPER: This new weapon isn't too effective if you know your way around the tracks, so practice is the best defence.

LIGHTNING CUP

CHOCO ISLAND 2



SHORT CUTS: None.

WEAPONS: Attack in the muddy patch as acceleration is badly effected.

MINI-TURBO: Some good early corners, but later ones are hindered by bumps.

SNAKING: Again, bumps are a problem. Pick your way through.

OTHER: Heavy Karts slow right down in the mud, so choose lighter options.

SKY GARDEN



SHORT CUTS: Use a Mushroom and jump to some clouds after the first turn.

WEAPONS: Items on the bridges are best. Try and knock Karts off the track.

MINI-TURBO: Accuracy is key – going off-road really slows you down. Stick to the track.

SNAKING: Very risky. Corners come thick and fast.

OTHER: Beware ramps that lead nowhere. Use Mushrooms.

BANSHEE BOARDWALK



SHORT CUTS: None.

WEAPONS: Leave Items where you drop down early on.

MINI-TURBO: Most corners can be beaten, but some are actually quite shallow.

SNAKING: Try an extra Turbo when you see the arrows leading to the Bats.

OTHER: The Giant Cheep Cheep is easily avoided, but not to be ignored.

YOSHI CIRCUIT



SHORT CUTS: Mushroom boost over Yoshi's arm.

WEAPONS: Karts will be drifting everywhere so drop Items in their way.

MINI-TURBO: You should be able to slide around every corner.

SNAKING: Not much chance, but with so many twists and turns, who needs to?

OTHER: Never fear. Piranha Plants don't attack like they did in Double Dash. Phew!

LOCK AND LOAD (CONT.)



BOO HOO: Stealing Items is fine, but being invincible is far more useful. Resist the temptation to throw it away.



THUNDERBOLT: Less effective than in the past. Being smaller actually helps you Snake more easily on the narrow tracks.



STAR: The Boost is pretty strong, but try and save it until you're in range to knock out an opponent. Then it's beautiful!

WARIO'S CHEATS



Here's My Top Twenty

Mario Kart DS

TRACK...	TIME TO GET STAFF GHOST....
Airship Fortress	2'07"748
Bowser Castle	2'19"661
Cheep Cheep Beach	1'43"654
Delfino Plaza	1'54"601
Figure-8 Circuit	1'36"481
Rainbow Road	2'16"246
Waluigi Pinball	2'23"288

Tony Hawk's AS

By completing the Classic mode a different number of times you'll unlock a whole heap of cheats. Beat it twice and you'll unlock Lip Balance, Manual Balance and Rail Balance. Beat it with all the characters and you'll get the Ninja Skater. Finish it nine times to get the Always Special cheat. Complete it ten times to get the Paper Tony cheat and finish 11 times for Hoverboard.



True Crime

Hold down the shoulder buttons while on the CompStat/Map menu, then enter the following codes to unlock some



tasty extras:
A, A, B,
A, A and A
for double
damage; B,
B, Y, B, Y
and B for a
million
dollars; Y,
A, Y, A, Y
and Y for
super cop;
X, B, A,
A, Y and X
for ultra-
easy mode.

- MARIO KART DS**
SSX ON TOUR
In the password menu enter LETSPLAY to have a really fun snowball fight.
- ADVANCE WARS DUAL STRIKE**
Beat the Hard campaign to unlock the Mistwalker and Soul of Hachi CO powers.
- MARIO PARTY 7**
SHREK SUPERSLAM
If you beat Tournament 25 you'll unlock Captain Hook as a playable character. Great.
- MARIO POWER TENNIS**
NINTENDOGS
Get 17,000 or more Trainer Points to unlock the Shetland Sheepdog at the kennel. Woof woof.
- SHADOW THE HEDGEHOG**
KIRBY POWER PAINTBRUSH
Complete 100% of the game and you'll be able to play the Long Jump challenge when you want.
- DANCING STAGE MARIO MIX**
Beat Ex Story mode and you'll get six more songs to select in the Free mode.
- TONY HAWK'S AMERICAN SK8LAND**
SPARTAN: TOTAL WARRIOR
Press left 11 times on the D-Pad and right seven times, then Y once to unlock a level select.
- POKÉMON XD**
Beat 100 Trainer Mt. Battle and you'll be able to choose one of the Johto starter Pokémon.
- DRAGONBALL Z SUPERSONIC WARRIORS 2**
MARIO SUPERSTAR BASEBALL
Beat all the mini-games on all difficulties and you'll unlock the special Grand Prix mode.
- TONY HAWK'S AMERICAN WASTELAND**
Find all the gaps in each level and you'll be able to use the Always Special cheat.
- MEGA MAN ZERO 4**
Complete the game without making any Chip Recipes and you'll unlock the Elf Chase mini-game.
- FIRE EMBLEM: PATH OF RADIANCE**
Connect your GBA to your 'Cube with a Fire Emblem game inside to get some new maps.
- NBA LIVE 06**
In the password screen, enter J23CARTVY to get the incredibly special S. Carter 3 trainer.
- TRUE CRIME: NEW YORK CITY**

Mario Party 7

To get souvenirs in the Duty Free shop; play every mini-game in the Mini-Game Cruise to get the Free Play Sub; complete the easy course in King of the River mode for Miracle Treasure Chest; play every board in Party mode for the MSS Sea Star.



Mario Power Tennis



To unlock the maximum level for your character you'll need to beat all the opponents using just one character in Exhibition on the level four difficulty setting. This will make you better than Federer.

Shadow the Hedgehog

There are different unlockable weapons available to you depending upon how you complete the game.

To get your mitts on the Samurai Sword finish the pure evil side; to grab the Satellite Lazer complete the bad side; if you want to get the Egg Vacuum finish the neutral side and for the Omochao Gun beat the slightly good side. Get to it!



DBZ: SS2



Beat different rounds and you'll unlock loads of different things. But if you finish every single mode you'll be able to get infinite Dragon Power. Now you can be Super-Saiyan all the time. Have that in your face.

Ask The Block!

This is the last time you'll see that slightly scary smile.



Q. Dear Mr. Block, I love my Nintendog more than my mum but I would love to get the Mario Kart for my husky to play with. How do I get it? Please tell me before my dog catches rabies with boredom.

Ken Thompson, Brighton

A. Err... I'm pretty sure that dogs don't get rabies from being bored. They normally get it from being bitten by VAMPIRE BATS.

They're everywhere, so be careful next time you leave your house. Well, to get the Mario Kart you'll need to up your Trainer Points and then find it on a walk. Unfortunately, there's no cheat to get it.

Q. My friends and I were wondering Block. Is it painful when Mario headbutts you? I think I'd be in agony if he headbutted me in my under parts. I certainly wouldn't be smiling.

Lee Borne, Lewisham

A. Funnily enough Lee, I often get asked this question at the annual Mario assistant meeting. And let me tell you that the pain is no greater than having all your innards shattered all at once then reformed in a split second. But I don't mind, as long as I get to give advice to someone.

Q. Hey Block tell me the answer to this problem or I'll set fire to my house. How do you get stars beside your nickname in Mario Kart DS? I've seen people online with them and now I want some. Tell me now because I'm about to strike the match. DO IT.

Glenn Riley, via email

A. Now just calm down, Glenn. I often hear voices telling me to burn things, but I just try to ignore them. You get stars by completing all the cups and missions with star ratings. Now please, just put the matches down.

Q. Block I think you're a very helpful, kind, considerate, attractive (in a square-type fashion), funny, well spoken and have many other qualities I'm probably not even aware of. Will you please marry me and bear my blocky children?

Helen Ball, Mansfield

A. Now listen here, Helen. I'm up for a spot of Block-based loving, but you must be one seriously misguided individual if you think I'm going to marry you. I couldn't have any children anyway, I clearly have no genitalia. Seek professional help, you freak.

If you want The Block to help you out, then tough luck. He's bored of all this helping lark and has decided to blow all the money he got working at NOM on cheap holidays and booze. If you're off to Ibiza anytime this year he'll be the square chap lying in the gutter.



Reader Cheats

"I can't believe this is the last time I'll be insulting you bunch of berks. I'm going to try extra hard to be as offensive as possible this issue. We'll all be in tears by the time I've finished!"



"Cheats? I love them. Anything that helps me do something with little or no effort is perfect in my book. Here's your last ever round-up of downright dirty deeds for a range of games from classics to latest releases. Just don't bother sending more, 'cos I ain't going to be around to read them."

Mario Kart: Double Dash!!



If anyone actually plays the Co-op mode anymore, then I have a tip for them. When you get hit by a weapon, get the person throwing your weapons to do a Power Slide as soon as you have enough speed. This will accelerate your kart quickly and return you to full speed.

SAM REYNOLDS, GREAT YARMOUTH



Still playing Double Dash? I don't know if you've seen my new game, Wario Kart DS? It's great and I can even go on the internet to beat people across the world. My nickname is KINGWario, so keep an eye out for me zipping past you into first place.

Advance Wars: Dual Strike



If you are stuck on a Tag Battle and have the option of using a Tag Power, just leave it for a moment. Move all of your unit and then use the Tag Power. Now you can move all your units again and when you change COs, you'll be able to use them one more time. This can help you slaughter your enemy.

ALEX BOULTER, BRIGHTON



Dunno what to say about this. So I'll tell you about a trip I had to the park. I went to feed the ducks. Sadly, they'd been eaten by a badger. I chased the badger but it started attacking me, so I started crying. That's typical of my exciting life.

Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance



Did you know you can double your bonus EXP (No I didn't! – Wario)? To do this you need the Paragon Skill. First, equip it to whoever you're going to use your bonus EXP on. Because of its effects, you can now level up twice but only use 100 EXP from your bonus stash. This can be combined with Blossom for amazing results.

ROWAN GUYVER, BRISTOL



See what I did? I added my own comment into your tip. It's a shame I have no idea what you're on about. If I was in a room with you, I'd just be nodding and saying: "Of course Rowan, that's great." While looking nervously for the door.

Sonic Heroes



Wario, here's an incredible cheat for Sonic Heroes (It better be incredible, otherwise there'll be trouble! – Wario)

In two player mode, hold A and Y while the other player picks the location to battle (Not at my house, though – Wario). Then let go when your team starts talking. Now all your characters will be metal.

JAMIE ANDREWS, VIA EMAIL



I hate Sonic, Shadow is my kind of 'hog. I think I'll ask him to join me and Waluigi in Team Evil. In fact, Shadow's so fast we could always send him down the shop for Pringles. Anyway, if you're reading Shadow, please apply in writing.

Super Smash Bros. Melee



While playing as Kirby, suck up your enemy and jump down off a level. Make sure your opponent doesn't escape. If you die with an enemy in your mouth, it will take the kill first. If you and the enemy both have just one life left, he will die first and you'll win. Now you can toast Mario with the pink puffball. *RICHARD CHANG, QATAR*



That's the kind of dirty tactic I like to see Richard. Although I'm not too happy about the whole committing suicide business. Also, I don't really like Kirby. He once tried to suck me up and it terrified me. His breath stinks as well.

Advance Wars: Dual Strike



Are Black Hole Megatanks smashing your forces? (Not really, but keep going – Wario) Attack the Megatank with three Recon units. They'll get pulverized in the counter fire, however the tank will lose all its ammo, leaving it open to attack. Just make sure there are no ACPCs or cities around for it to restock its ammo. *SEAN LYON, STENTON*



Sounds like you're having a lot of trouble. I just wouldn't bother if I was you. I've got a new DS game coming out this year. It's the only thing worth playing... apart from the Warioland games.

Nintendogs



Here's a great tip for you (*I shall reserve judgement for now – Wario*)

If you want to unlock the Dalmatian at your kennels, ask your friends to see if anyone has a Fireman's Hat. If they do, ask them to give it to you in Bark mode. Now you'll be able to select the Dalmatian in the kennels. Plus you can give the hat back, so your friend won't lose the item. *ALICE LEECH, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE*



This is a fairly good tip, Alice. Although I would probably just steal the hat and then never speak to the friend again. So if you hear that Waluigi and I aren't speaking anymore, that's why.

The Sims 2



Go to the fridge and select Group Meal Ingredients. Put beef, carrot, egg and milk on the plate. Look at the food and it will say there's something special about it. Eat this before you go to work and you're more likely to get promoted. *OLIVER FINN, VIA EMAIL*



Does this work in real life? If I eat this meal before marching into a bank and asking for a million pounds, will it work? Wow, I can't believe this. We're going to make a fortune. Let's just hope and pray no one else reads this.

Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance



Stefan is a special swordmaster. You can unlock him on Feral Frontier. To get him you need to move Lethe or Mordacai to a square in the top-right corner. Starting from the top-right corner, move three squares to the left and one down – Stefan will appear. If you move there with one of your two Laguz he will join your party. If you move there with any Beorc he will appear and give you his S-Level sword called the Vague Katti. If you recruit him he comes with the sword.

LEIGHANNE BROOK, VIA EMAIL



Well Leighanne I hope you're happy that you are my last ever Wario Winner. It's an emotional moment and I expect you're weeping uncontrollably as you read. As a parting shot, I just want to thank myself for all the hard work I've done over the past few months, I've done an absolutely brilliant job, no thanks to you lot. No doubt I'll see you all somewhere in the gutter.



PEACH AND BOWSER'S ROYAL MAIL

Get in touch!



royalmail@
nintendomagazine.co.uk



Send 'TXT', add a space then
your message, to 84070



Royal Mail, Nintendo Official
Magazine, Emap Active,
Bushfield House, Orton
Centre, Peterborough,
Cambridgeshire, PE2 5UW

Win! Win! Win!

The Star Letter and Star Picture winners
this month get their hands on a brand
new DS and copy of *Mario & Luigi:
Partners in Time* to go with it.
Runners-up get a copy of the game.



>> Karting disaster

I couldn't wait until Christmas, so I bought *Mario Kart DS* when it came out, but it's awful! How could you give it 95%? My brother and I had finished 50cc and 100cc after a few days. We haven't tried multiplayer, gone online or checked out the missions just yet, but your score is far too much. We both agree that it's worth no more than 75%.

Harry and Jack Walker, via email



We had to hold Rob down after reading him your email, as he was a very angry man. He looked as though he was ON FIRE. There's so much to try in *Mario Kart*. Multiplayer, whether online or not, is mind blowing. Finish 150cc and do all the other stuff, then write back to us? We're certain you'll have changed your mind. Or Rob will change it for you.

>> I need convincing

I have been a hardcore Nintendo fan for quite a long time, but I am getting slightly worried that the Revolution is falling behind expectations for next-gen consoles. I've been reading games websites and one says the Revolution is just a 'souped-up Xbox.' I have every faith in Nintendo, but I am now beginning to wonder if it will live up to expectations.

Zac Bryant, Essex



Don't believe everything you read. The Xbox 360 might be the first of the next-gen consoles and some of the games are technically amazing, but being first doesn't always mean it's the best. The Revolution is going to open up a whole new way of playing with the sensors and remote control-style controller. Just hang on in there - Revolution will blow you away.

>> Super Luigi Bros.

I must admit I think you're overdoing it with Mario. You've got pictures of him everywhere! Why not more pictures of Bowser, Peach or Luigi? I know *Peach Smash Football* or *Luigi Bros.* doesn't sound so good, but the pictures of Mario are getting on my nerves. I speak for everyone that agrees with me, PLEASE NO MORE PICTURES OF MARIO.

John Aitken, via email



'You speak for everyone' do you? By 'everyone' do you just mean 'yourself'?

So you don't want us to worship Mario, the main guy who brought you SM64 and *Mario & Luigi*, the first classic of '06? *Luigi's Mansion* doesn't quite match the splendour of *Mario World*, does it? And as for Peach and Bowser, look up there! What do you want? Blood?

>> Big Mac attack

The other day some chavvy idiot insulted the new Game Boy Micro by saying it looked like a cheap McDonald's toy. How can someone slag off such a stylish and well-made machine? I told them to go and pick up an original Game Boy Advance and a picture of the PSP.

Daniel Hughes, Wick, Littlehampton



People will always knock what they don't understand. The Micro is a great little machine with its much sharper screen and changeable faces. People have been changing the faces on their Nokias for years and no-one has said anything

about that! Plus you'll probably get twice the amount of hours of play out of a cool Micro than a PSP.

>> Bring on Revlo!

I'm pleased to see that Revolution will enable games to be played with just one hand. This is great news for disabled gamers. My uncle is disabled with no use of his left hand. He gets frustrated over the fact that he can't play games properly. He's got an N64 and can never play the games because of the design of the controllers. Finally Nintendo is doing something about it.

Tom Roberts, Ely



Nintendo obviously want to make Revolution playable for everyone. It's not the first time Nintendo has helped disabled people play games. Back in the days of the NES they made the Hands Free controller which had a chin-mounted joystick and a sip-puff switch which activated the A and B buttons.

>> Poet's corner

Mario, Link, Samus too Wario, Yoshi, don't forget Boo Peach, Toad and Waluigi Ganondorf, Bowser just take it easy

Liam McLuckie, Sunderland



We popped along to the Freezezy Peak Retirement Home to see what

GAME or LAME?

IF YOU'VE GOT A WICKED GAME IDEA, MAKE A COVER FOR IT AND SEND IT IN. DON'T BOTHER IF IT'S *SUPER SMASH BROS. MELEE 2* OR *MARIO VS SONIC*, THOUGH.

GAME

NINTENDO GAMECUBE

MORTAL NOMBAT



Mortal NOMbat

By Robert Chalmers, Anon

• WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

The NOM team are pulled into the outworld for a MK showdown.

• WHO'S IN IT?

The NOM team, past NOMsters and ultimately Miyamoto (possibly in his Link outfit).

• OUR MOST FAVOURITE IDEA?

Special moves will include NOMalities, Brutal Reviews and Fatal Reviews.

• NOM RECKONS

WE WANT IT! WE'D HAVE JOHNNY CAGE IN SECONDS!

LAME

NINTENDO GAMECUBE



Metropolitan Police

By Graham Barnes-Warden, London

• WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

You're a copper on the Met. Police, assigned to take down underworld crime across the capital.

• WHO'S IN IT?

You, your partner and up to seven other coppers versus a whole world of criminals, from murderers to drug dealers.

• OUR LEAST FAVOURITE IDEA?

Playing a cop. Haven't you heard of *Dead II Rights* and *True Crime*?

• NOM RECKONS

BEEN THERE, SEEN IT, DONE IT.

Dimension dementia

STAR LETTER

Recently, large amounts of gamers have been moaning that the Nintendo DS lacks 3D games and the company is just creating 2D games as it did for previous handhelds. In my opinion, this is completely wrong and these gamers clearly don't understand that while good graphics are key, they don't make the game what it is. Anyone who says this is ignoring all the great 2D games out there such as *Meteos* and *Polarium*.

Olly Temple, Cambis

Finally someone is shouting the name of 2D! The DS might be able to push 3D, but when there are some shocking excuses for games when they use it, it's pathetic. *Mario Kart* and the *Sonic Rush* boss battles are amazing, but the 3D in other games is awful. We'd rather have a mint 2D game any day of the week. *Gunstar* and *Meteos* are testament to that.



Gruntilda thought of your poem. After slipping past Klungo Security at the door, this is what she had to say: "Come on over and read your rhyme, Liam's words sound like mine. But why choose Mario, he's a fatty, choose Brentilda you skatty chappy." We didn't want to argue with her.

>> Paramount idea

I have just had a great idea, even if it is nicked from the PSP. My plan is to create carts for the Game Boy Advance and DS that can play films. I'd love to be able to do that on a long car journey and don't want to give my money to Sony for a PSP, or buy an expensive portable DVD player.

Joel Almond, via email



You don't have to do either 'cos there's such things as CLASSIC GAMES like *Mario Kart*, *Castlevania* and *Fire Emblem* that will make those

hours fly by. If you're interested there are GBA video carts already over in the US for stuff like *Pokémon* and *SpongeBob*, though you can't get them here.

>> Guessing game

I really want to get a Revolution when it comes out, but I am worried they will cost a bomb like the Xbox 360 did at launch. The DS was cheap at release and I hope Nintendo does the same for the Revolution. Have you got any idea of the price yet?

Joseph Malam, via email



NEWS FLASH! Revolution will cost £599.99 and come with 18 wireless controllers and 101 free games. Expect it to hit shops nationwide on 1 April 2006! PS None of the above information is correct. We have no idea when Revolution will arrive, or how much it will be. Sorry about that.

>> A mighty disappointment

What the hell are you lot playing at? I bought *King Kong* after your preview said it would get over 85%, but I finished it after just a weekend's play! Then, a few weeks later, I read Rob's review that said it was only worth 69% and that the game ripped his 'excited heart out and stamped on it'. I want my money back!

Jason Callington, via email



Our preview scores are only meant as a guide, a prediction of the final score, not what it actually got. That's why it says it in massive letters at the end of each preview.

As for *King Kong*, we really thought it would score big, but just a day's worth of play for £40 isn't enough in our books, regardless of whether it's a blockbuster movie tie-in or not.

ASK SHY GUY



Q. Do I need to have broadband to play against other people in different countries on *Mario Kart DS*?
J Woodcliffe, via email

nintendo
Wi-Fi
connection

A. To batter one of your mates, or someone on the other side of the world, you will need broadband. Alternatively, you can find the Wi-Fi hotspots in your local area if you don't have the set up at home. Check out <http://www.btopenzone.com> to find out where you can log on and play.

Q. In *NOM 160* you advertised the Wi-Fi USB Connector and said it was coming out on 25 November. I've been to every game shop in my area and they haven't got any in stock. Please tell me where I can get one, but not eBay!
Lewis Hollywood, Wirral

A. You're gonna have to get yourself online if you want to get one. The Connector is only for sale on the internet. Amazon, Play.com and your dreaded eBay are places where we've seen them and they'll set you back £30.

Q. I read on the internet that *NOM* is switching companies from Emap to someone called Future Publishing in February. Is this true? If so, I'll miss you guys. What are you going to do?
David Jasiewicz, via email

A. What you've read is true. The current team won't be making the magazine after this issue as new people will be making *NOM*. As for us lot, we're taking a well-earned rest on Isle Delfino. Seal is flying us there in his private jet. Actually we'd better go, the limos and ladies are waiting...

Q. Do you have any idea when *Twilight Princess* will be released? I know it's been delayed, but for how long?

Richard Morgan, via email

A. The team behind *Zelda* are still stating that it will appear on GameCube in 2006, though what month we have no idea. It's got to launch before Revolution does which is due after the 'current fiscal year'. In other words, Revolution hits at some point between the end of March and the end of December. You do the maths.



Q. Is Nintendo making a new *Super Smash Bros.* for GameCube? I'm sure like many *NOM* readers I'm a massive fan of the game, and can't wait until Revolution for another Nintendo fighting game.

Chris Reid, via email

A. You'll have to make do with *Melee* for now on GameCube. With Revolution launching later this year and a new *Smash Bros.* already in development for it there will be no time to make one for the current console.



Spotted

At my local sweet shop I found some Jelly Pizza, but guess who was on the front of the box? None other than Mario dressed as a chef! Nintendo isn't mentioned anywhere on the box! What's that all about? The pizza tasted horrible, too!

Abdur-Rahman Abdul-Samad, via email

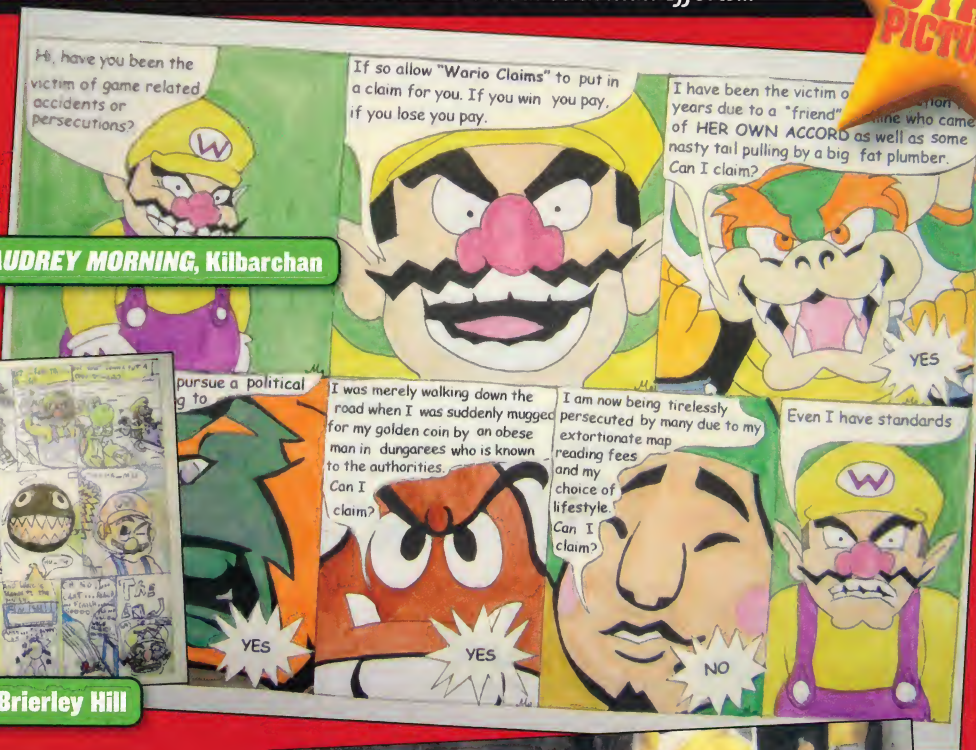




Talented crayon pushers show us their wares. Miles better than our stick man efforts...

***Talented crayon pushers show us their wares.
Miles better than our stick man efforts...***

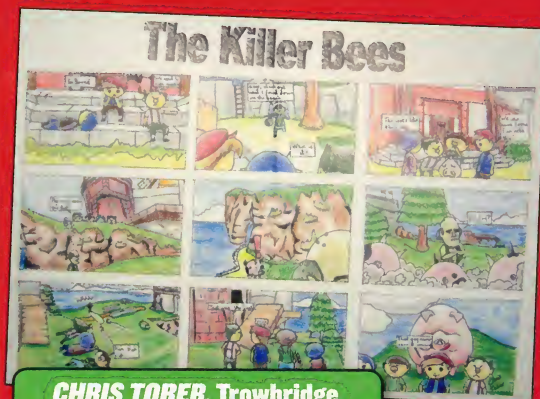
**STAR
PICTURE**



AUDREY MORNING, Kilbarchan



JOSH WUNDERLICH, Brierley Hill



CHRIS TOBER, Trowbridge



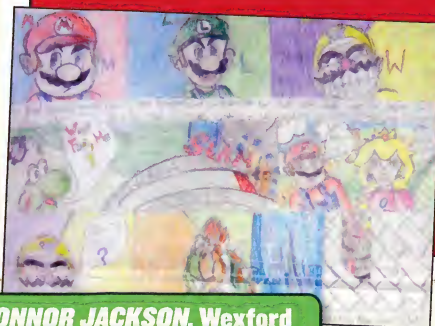
SIMON PALMER, Chippenham



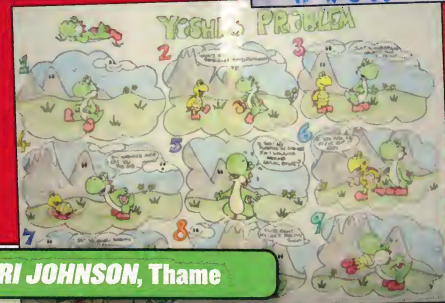
PAUL BATCHELOR, Doncaster



ARRAN MACKINTOSH, Fareham

**KOSMIC KITTY, Broxbourne**

CONNOR JACKSON, Wexford



KERI JOHNSON, Thame

>> PG tip

My mum's getting a DS soon so instead of shouting for a cup of tea she will send me a message. I hope she doesn't do that every five minutes, 'cos the only way to get some peace will be to turn it off. My brother and sister keep asking me for a go on PictoChat, too! Should I hide my DS?

Martin Elsom, Hull



The easy answer is don't go into PictoChat, that way you won't know your mum has been sending messages. Tell her you've been busy with homework, or tidying your bedroom or whatever. Or just tell her to make the bleedin' tea herself if she's that thirsty.

>> The perfect woman

I was reading your preview of the new Princess Peach game, and was pleasantly surprised. She has all the grace of a swan and the ferocity of a lion. The Emotions feature looks pure genius, too. The health bar threw me off a little, but this game deserves 99.9%, a little bit of health never killed nobody and she could certainly make Mario and Bowser run for their lives.

Alexander Savvas, Dudley



So the health bar threw you off by just 0.1%? 99.9%? Have you gone completely mad, Alexander? The health bar will mark this down a lot more than that, not to mention the fact that it's rather easy. It's one of the best DS games so far, but it's not quite *Mario Bros. 3* now is it?

>> Nightmare in dreamland

I had an amazing dream last night. I was running away from a Samus monster and saw DK in his kart up ahead. I ran up and kicked DK out of the kart and drove away. As I turned back I saw DK getting ripped to pieces. That's a dream, huh?

Harry Stevenson, via email



Tim had an amazing dream the other night. He was running away from Rachel Stevens and saw DK up ahead in his kart. He ran up, booted the Kong out, jumped behind the wheel and pulled up alongside the songstress. She jumped in and they drove off into the sunset. Now they're happily married with four 6'5" children (*I wish* – Ed).

>> Hairy Mary

In all the Mario games, even the first, he had a moustache. He just turned 20-years-old a couple of months ago so he's had a moustache for ALL his life! Why?



N.Ireland

Mario was born with the 'tache, we checked with Mr Miyamoto. What you might not know is that Mario has so much back hair that he has it shaved twice a day. He'd just had it finished when he appeared topless in *Mario & Luigi*.

>> I'm a lady

I know Nintendo wanted to make Tingle strange but did they have to make him so camp?

I mean, he wants to be a fairy and builds a giant tower of himself on an island where he lives. He walks worse than a Thunderbird puppet, waddling with every step he takes, and does a strange dance whenever he gets excited.



Lewis Tanner, Brentwood

Poor old Tingle, he doesn't have many friends does he? His body stocking and crazy Kooloo-Limpahs must be doing something right as he's got his own RPG in the works. Maybe that will put an end to people slugging off the poor man-fairy.

>> Solid Snake

Have you guys ever faced a person Snaking while playing *Mario Kart DS* online or have you ever done it yourself? It's really the only way to win against some of the tougher opponents.

Alex Treptow, via email



Snaking in *Mario Kart* separates the men from the boys.

Rob's the king when he battles Tim in an office face-off and causes Tim to shout, swear and cry, usually in that order. Just remember though, Snaking is fine, just don't quit out of an online challenge. That's for losers.

>> Post-Christmas blues

I can't stick the time after Christmas. I usually finish the game I get by early January and there's never any decent releases for the first few months of the year. I get so bored waiting for something that's going to blow me away, but last year we had to wait until March for the DS and *Resident Evil 4*. What am I going to have to put up with this year?

James Lawler, Beverley



There's always a quiet time after Christmas as most games companies try to get their games out in the

run-up to the big day. This is the busiest time and when they are more likely to make money as people are on the look out for presents. There are some great games early this year, though – *Mario & Luigi 2*, *Viewtiful Joe*, *Double Trouble* and *Wario Ware Twisted* are just some of the games that you should be looking out for!

>> I want real football!

I love football games and recently picked up *FIFA 06* and *Mario Smash Football*. Now I'm not one to write to a magazine to complain, but it really annoys me that there's nothing decent out there on GameCube for true footy fans. *Pro Evo* is on other consoles and there's none of those management sims. *FIFA 06* is too easy and *MSF* is just stupid. C'mon Konami, make it happen!



Ryan MacMillan, Dunfermline
If you want realistic football then there really is nothing other than *FIFA* on GameCube at the moment. You can try and get *Winning Eleven* which is a few years old now, but this only came out in Japan. Try *Mario Smash Footy* with some friends – it's loads better than.

>> Forget Pokémon

I desperately wanted a copy of *Pokémon Emerald* so I saved up for ages. But I shouldn't have bothered. The new animations (and not a lot else) just aren't worth it. If *Diamond* and *Pearl* are going to be a step up in the *Pokémon* series, then Nintendo needs to put some drastic improvements in the games.

Peter Oxley, Oxfordshire



As RPGs go, *Pokémon* is one of the best out there, but it certainly needs a big rethink for the DS versions of *Pearl* and *Diamond*. Calling your Pokémon or shouting the attacks into the mic would be mint, and Nintendo is sure to use the two screens of the DS to their advantage. *Emerald* is a great game in our opinion, but, in truth, *Battle Frontier* is really the only new thing in there.

TEXT THE EDITOR

TELL US WHAT'S ON YOUR BRAIN...



Now you can let us know how you feel about the world of Nintendo on a text!

Tap in 'TXT', leave a space, add your message and send it to 84070. You must get permission from the bill payer before texting us, as each text costs 25p to send. Every text sent to us can be viewed online at <http://www.clubnom.com> and here's just a small selection of your ramblings:

* IM A GIRL AND I REALLY WANT 1 OF PEACHES PINK DRESSES PLEASE SELL 1 IN YR SHOP

* i got nintendo's labrador version and i have lots of dogs including a cream labrador called Parker named after my old dog i dont have any more

* omg im gonna destroy all teh revolutions except 1 so i can hav it 2 myself cackles . IN YOUR FACE NOM!

* nintendo should make more luigi and waluigi games because luigi is cooler

* I THINK THEY SHOULD MAKE A MARIO PARTY DS.THE MICROPHONE AND TOUCH SCREEN WOULD WORK BRILLIANTLY

* sumtims i wear green tights on my head and run around my street with a toy sword and, pretend 2 be Link

* someone should make link appear as a guest on south park. it would be classic! if pokémon did it, so can link! links the man!



My brain has enough power to generate electricity

Nintendo know-it-all

Show them all that you're the cleverest person ever

1. Who is Wario's alter ego in *Wario Ware: Touched*?
2. What is the name of Shigeru Miyamoto's Nintendog?
3. Which previously playable character wasn't playable in *Mario Party 5*?
4. Who is the final boss in *Banjo Kazooie*?
5. What is the name of the method used to catch Pokémon in *Colosseum*?
6. Who do you play as in *Geist*?
7. What are the three difficulty settings on *Donkey Konga*?
8. In *Majora's Mask*, what is the name of the Skull Kids' fairy?
9. Who do you get songs from in *Animal Crossing*?
10. Which planet does *Star Fox Adventures* take place on?
11. What year was the Super NES released?
12. What is the name of Viewtiful Joe's flying machine?
13. How many missiles can you have in the *Metroid* games?
14. Where does Ness live?
15. What was Peach called in the arcade *Donkey Kong* game?

HANGMAN

Fill in the gaps to work out the game names.

1	U_IR_
2	_E_R_T/_/_A_A
3	H__VE_T/_O_N
4	E__C_R_PL__K__
5	A__EN/HO__N_D
6	_R__Y/T_X_
7	P__FE__/_D__K
8	_AP__/_A__O

Sonic Puzzle

Once again, *Sonic* characters have got themselves muddled-up in a load of letters. Bunch of idiots.

Y S C F R C R E P M U B S U P C F P B R
S L H G Z I H Z G A Q V C K I K M N F J
Z I A D B N X J C C F P N N C E B G M D
E A O D H O K I E D H W O F H O S R I L
U T R N G S D L F M U S E T V J T V M A
D Q K U I R L B T S L G U W D K P T A W
S L E K Q E B B N A G I A N S C I F U X
X D A G I P E L T M Y M D N H W A V X B
E G Y R G U K E A Q A T F L A Y H N M B
F N D L E S M N E Z M S O P D H C D O F
O N M J X M F O A L E O Z P O M D O O S
S K T R T I E O U I N J O X W J P H U V
T U I O M X R S R O U G E W Y F A W W L
Z N A A R V B C O B S O L E T E Q R E A
G K E M I X S I D A X Q B Q S S L Z S Y
N R C M Y M Q N F L H K N U C K O E S A
C A T U R R D Q X O B C F G H V M S V R
Z A P Q H M O D O D C E H C I L C K C T
G J J Z G K L S K B R P H S J C S B T E
E X M X X C G X E N V M G L H O S B R B

- | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|---------------|
| » AMY ROSE | » CREAM | » ROUGE |
| » BLAZE | » EGGMAN | » SHADOW |
| » BUMPER | » KNUCKLES | » SONIC |
| » CHAO | » METAL SONIC | » SUPER SONIC |
| » CHAOS EMERALD | » RING | » TAILS |



ODD-1-OUT

Which of these is a real bounty hunter in *Metroid Prime: Hunters*?

- 1 Spire
- 2 Clarkzor
- 3 Fereaze
- 4 Moltar
- 5 Brak

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE



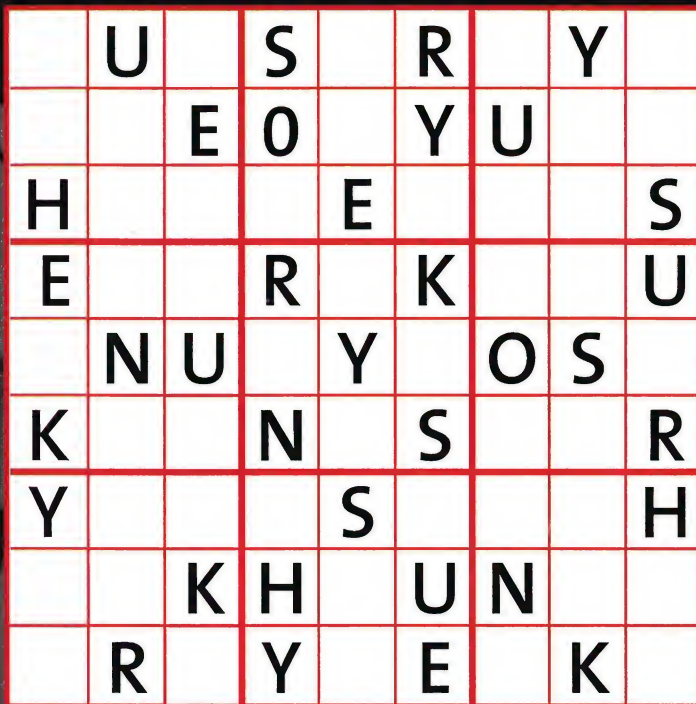
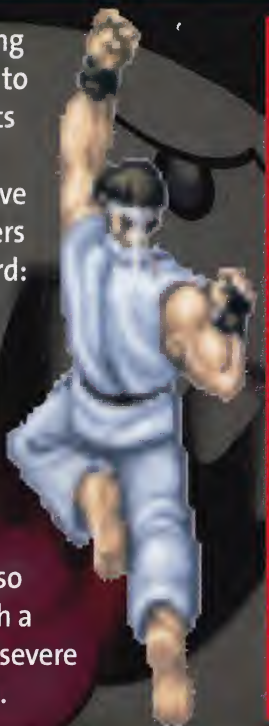
Shadow can run so fast. So fast, in fact, that he can create parallel dimensions, in which his game is actually a lot of fun. Spot the five differences, then laugh in his face. Ha!

It's the all-new NINTENDOKU

It's the craze that's sweeping the nation and we wanted to be part of it. But who wants to fit numbers into a grid?

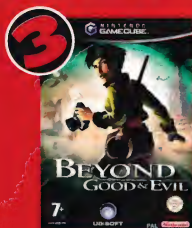
No-one, that's who. So we've swapped numbers for letters that spell an awesome word: **SHORYUKEN.**

Make sure each row, each column and each square of nine blocks features every letter only once. They don't have to be in order, that would be ridiculous. It can be tricky, so it's best to experiment with a pencil. But, most of all, persevere - it'll be worth it in the end.



??? KNOW THE SCORE ???

Just match the games to the scores - or else



A: 84% B: 71% C: 79% D: 73%



>>>>>>> HOW WELL DID YOU DO LAST TIME? <<<<<<<<

WARIO WARE

- 100
- 10
- 130
- Baron Samedi
- 31
- Professor Gerald Robotnik
- Hang Glider, Rocket Belt and Gyrocopter
- Deathborn
- Ice, Rock and Steel
- King Dedede and Meta Knight
- Zebras
- Special Project
- Totema
- Meseta
- Wiggler

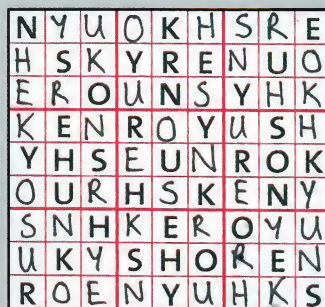
FINAL FANTASY

- Cruisin' USA
- Ping Pals
- Rayman
- Fire Emblem
- Lost Kingdoms
- Soul Calibur
- Doshin the Giant
- Banjo Kazooie



WARIO WARE

- Bloody Roar
- Metroid Prime 2: Echoes

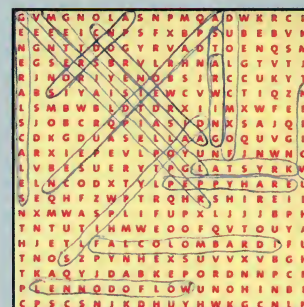


WARIO WARE

- Wario Ware (92%)
- Splinter Cell (84%)
- Second Sight (86%)
- Catwoman (62%)

WARIO WARE

- Diddy Kong



REMEMBER... GET ALL THE ANSWERS ON PAGE 3!

GAME OVER



Quit

Restart

IF YOU LIKE THRASHING AUSSIES



YOU WILL LIKE

**MARIOKART.
DS**

Why is Mario Kart DS even more super than the legendary Super Mario Kart? Not because you get fired through cannons. Not because it has the most frantic finishes in history. But because it is Wi-Fi. Beat up to 3 Aussies, or any other earthlings, by just flicking a switch. Link up to Wi-Fi through your broadband connection or at our special hotspots in a town near you. Not only is Nintendo Wi-Fi dead simple, it's free. Happy thrashing!



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NINTENDO DS

open up and play



WARNING

Sonic can now make heart-stopping jumps between both DS screens.
BUT YOU CAN'T!

One screen's just not enough for Sonic, as he blasts onto the Nintendo DS.

In the first game to really push the DS to its extremes, Sonic rushes, races, dives and dashes between **BOTH** screens at true Sonic speed. With all the dizzying dives and brain-twisting loops you'd expect from a Sonic game, plus a mysterious female companion and wireless play, it's a real Sonic rush to the head.

SONIC RUSH™

